

Tell 'em Where You Got It!

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Interviews with Robert L. McDonald and Colleagues

From oral history interviews conducted by Peggy McDonald
Edited by Peggy McDonald

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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PREFACE

Founded in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) records and collects interviews that address significant topics in Nevada's remembered past. The program's chroniclers are primary sources: people who participated in or directly witnessed the events and phenomena that are the subjects of the interviews. Following precedent established by Allan Nevins at Columbia University in 1948, and perpetuated since by academic programs such as ours, these recorded interviews and their transcripts are called oral histories.

The text in this book comes from oral history transcripts of interviews conducted by Peggy McDonald under the auspices of the UNOHP. In her introduction, McDonald explains her approach to editing and constructing a narrative from the series of interviews she conducted with her father, Robert McDonald. The remaining interviews, with Robert McDonald's colleagues, have been edited for clarity and for organizational purposes. Readers who desire access to the unaltered oral histories featured in this volume are invited to contact the offices of the UNOHP.

To add context to written representations of the spoken word, the UNOHP uses certain

editorial conventions. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs; and ellipses are used, not to indicate that material has been deleted, but to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the oral history, we advise the reader to keep in mind that this book is comprised of personal accounts of remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. The views and opinions expressed in these interviews are those of the chroniclers and not the UNOHP. Intelligent readers will approach them with the same anticipation of discovery, tempered with caution, that they would bring to government reports, diaries, newspaper stories, and other interpretations of historical information.

UNOHP
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INTRODUCTION

When I approached Tom King about doing an oral history with my dad, Bob McDonald, he responded with, “Well, he’s been on our list.” After I left his office for the second time, he convinced me that I should do the interviews myself.

I began this project in the spring of 2006, but because my dad was not a linear historian, and instead told stories as he remembered them, the cache I delivered needed work. At Tom’s suggestion, I switched gears and treated the contents of the ten interviews I had conducted as the basis for a narrative memoir.

First, I rearranged the contents of the transcripts and placed them in a more or less chronological order while retaining the first person narrative. Then I incorporated excerpts from two other interviews with my father, or I referred to them in order to corroborate statements my father had said to me. One was conducted by Don Dawson on September 18, 1989, and another was conducted by Ken Adams on August, 14, 1995. Dawson’s interview was given to my dad in cassette form, and a family friend, Andrea Pope De Michieli, transcribed it and gave a copy to our family. Ken Adams’

interview was completed under the auspices of the UNOHP and can be found in their research collection.

Both interviews focused on my father’s World War II experiences, but in reading them I could tell that both interviewers had had a similar experience with regard to keeping my father on topic. This proved to be a gift to me in that his little tangents offered a wealth of details regarding other aspects of his life. In my dad’s personal papers, I unearthed a daily diary that he wrote during his first assignment in the Aleutians, and I found the hidden transcript of his court martial trial in Hawaii. The diary and court martial transcript have been donated to the Special Collections department in the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center at the University of Nevada, Reno.

The primary reference materials I used to flesh out information about my father’s service in World War II were two books about the Aleutian campaign, *The Aleutian Warriors: A History of the 11th Air Force & Fleet Air Wing* by John Haile Cloe and *The Thousand Mile War: World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians* by Brian Garfield. Other documents were sought out to enhance the

narrative, to fill in gaps, and to determine the exact date of a particular event. I consulted the oral histories of Bud Beasley, Ralph Denton, Joe McDonald Sr., Grant Sawyer, Alan Bible and Fred Anderson, all found in the UNOHP research collection. Gary E. Elliott's book, *Senator Alan Bible and the Politics of the New West*, provided important facts, too.

Most of the memoir focuses on my father's childhood, his old neighborhood on South Virginia Street in Reno, Zephyr Cove at Lake Tahoe, and his days at Reno High School, but the one topic that took on almost mythical proportions was that of his brother, Joe McDonald Jr. I found that Joe's adventures were still etched in the memories of nonagenarians Ollie Aymar and Jim Herz, contemporaries of Joe, when I informally asked them about Bob's brother.

In his later years, my dad would often grab your arm, look you in the eye and say, "Now, let me tell you something, and this is the TRUTH!" as if all the other things he had told you before were lies. So, there were a couple of times I went to him with questions about the accuracy of a statement in one of my recorded interviews, and he would become adamant that his recollection was correct. For example, he referred to a street that intersected Virginia Street by his house at 710 South Virginia as "Steiner" Street.

"Dad, there is no Steiner Street," I told him. We even drove down and all around the neighborhood, and he pointed out where Steiner was.

"That's St. Lawrence Street," I said.

He would not relent. A few weeks later, I went to the Nevada Historical Society to look up information about Ernie Primm and the Red Line, and as I was perusing the historic Sanborn street maps, I saw that the east end of St. Lawrence Street was once actually Steiner Street.

My father's biggest character flaw was his generosity because he loved people. He wanted to hear their stories, and we often had the characters of these stories come to life in our

living room at all times of the day, while in the middle of the night the phone rang with calls from Mac's Bail Bonds.

Some of the original senior partners in his law firm—Don Carano, Spike Wilson, Leo Bergin and John Frankovich—fleshed out my father's life as an attorney by graciously allowing me to interview them. These interviews, also included here, are almost verbatim with very light editing, and my questions to the chroniclers were either incorporated or deleted. Neoma Saulnier and Don Manoukian also granted me interviews. Neoma was Bob's secretary for almost seven years, and Don was a key player in the 1968 campaign to elect Senator Alan Bible.

On Sunday, September 19, 2010, the last day of the 47th Annual National Championship Air Races, I was sitting on the beach at Sand Harbor with two of my childhood friends. There were high winds, big waves and fast moving clouds. Suddenly, a large military plane flew over our heads, followed by a smaller plane. As they circled Lake Tahoe and made their way southwest, I recognized the second plane as a P-38 Lightning, the same plane flown by my father in the Aleutians. I spontaneously jumped up, waved my arms like a windmill, and hooted and hollered at the plane. Even though my dad died at the end of 2008, he continues to make himself known wherever I roam in Nevada.

Bob McDonald enjoyed a good joke and was often the cause of other people's laughter. My parents taught me to find humor in almost any situation, usually by example. Many of his adventures in this memoir are funny because of his positive outlook, so I hope you enjoy and laugh out loud at this thin slice of a full life.

There were two sayings our father would often send us out the door with. The first one was "You be careful," if we were traveling any distance. The second one, "Tell 'em where ya got it!" was his way of letting us know that he believed in us and all our endeavors.

I would like to give special thanks to Mary Larson, Tom King, Allison Tracy, and Alicia

Barber at the UNOHP who gave me guidance and support. Others that contributed to the completion of this project are my brother and sister, Tim and Martha, Bob Cashell, McDonald Carano Wilson LLP, and the Bonanza Casino. I would also like to acknowledge UNR Special Collections and the Nevada Historical Society for granting permission to use photographs from their collections in this volume.

Peggy McDonald
October 2010

ROBERT L. McDONALD

I've never wanted to live permanently anywhere else other than in the state of Nevada, and particularly in the city of Reno. I was born in my parents' home at 710 South Virginia Street on March 15, 1920. Our house, being almost at the corner of Thoma and South Virginia, seemed like it was the center of my neighborhood, and the earliest that I remember being there was when I was about four years old, playing in the backyard where we had about five plum trees. The trees were always very successful, and the Piggly-Wiggly store that was across from us on South Virginia bought and sold what I'd pick and carry over in a basket. That was my first job, and everyone loved our plums. There were two stores next to each other, the Piggly-Wiggly which was a chain, and an independent one called Gunter's. We went to both stores.

My brother, Joe, was about four years older than me and a great big brother even though we weren't real close all the time, but if I ever got in a fight or had anything I needed help with, it seemed he was always there. There never was anybody that could beat him in a fight, whether it was with gloves or fists. He

was a tough guy. His reputation was that he was fair and honorable, but you didn't cross him, because he'd always win.

I went to Southside Elementary School. A day at my house was pretty near the same every morning. My mother would say, "Hurry up and eat your mush so you can get to school on time," and we always would mind her. If the Menke family or any of the kids that lived on Center Street were going at the same time, we'd go together. If my dad or one of the members of a family happened to be taking a car, we could bum a ride, but other than that, 99 percent of the time we walked right up Center Street to Southside School. As time went by and we got bigger, we had two-wheeled bikes, so we'd ride up to Southside and attach them with a lock to the picket fence to keep somebody from stealing our transportation. When school was over, we'd always ride home down Center Street since Virginia Street had more traffic compared to Center and was not as safe. We mostly brought our lunch—just peanut butter sandwiches—and sometimes we'd steal somebody else's lunch and eat that. Just kind of a routine thing. [laughter]



The McDonalds' home at 710 S. Virginia Street, ca. 1941.

It was very, very seldom that I can recall my dad riding to work in his car. He walked downtown from our house to the *Nevada State Journal* or the *Reno Evening Gazette*, depending on where he was working, and the offices were eventually across the street from each other at 123 and 124 Center Street. The Stein Bar was right across the street from the *Journal* building, and Reno Print was next door to the Stein and manned by Harry Frost, future father-in-law to my good friend Pat Brady. My dad would then walk home at the end of the day. He knew every dog from the *Gazette* newspaper building to 710 South Virginia.

My dad wore a hat and, evidently, learned that from living out in those mining towns out in the desert. When he'd arrive home, sometimes he'd play around the house if he needed—he liked to pick all the weeds out and do that sort of thing—and my mother would cook dinner, and

then we'd eat it. Unless he was tied up, 95 percent of the time he came home somewhere between six and eight o'clock, but he wasn't the type of father or husband that didn't come home. We all sat down together for dinner, but we didn't say grace, which has always amazed me. [laughter] I don't remember saying grace.

My mother was not Catholic, but my dad was, and because of her not belonging to the church, they got married in the rectory at Saint Thomas, but when my brother and I were babies we got baptized. My dad went to mass every Sunday and passed the plate, but my mother very, very seldom went—she might've gone on Christmas day or another holy day, like Easter. Every once in a while I went to mass with him because he'd just say, "You want to go to church?" and sometimes I'd say yes, but he never made us go. I always thought that it was because my mother was not Catholic that he didn't try to force or make us active



Bob's mother, Leola McDonald, with his brother, Joe Jr., and Bob as a baby, ca. 1922.

Catholics. I don't think my brother went much, if at all, but he was very active outside of, but for, the church. When Joe was at the University of Nevada, he coached football for the St. Thomas football team and did a lot of athletic things for them although he was not an active member. In later years, when I went to Santa Clara, I suppose, I became an active Catholic, but I don't know if my brother ever did do that. My dad later in life attended Our Lady of the Snows instead of St. Thomas.

My dad's mother, Cecelia Kellegher McDonald, was from Leitrim, Ireland, and she was Catholic. I might have met her once, but I don't remember meeting her in Reno, because

she had moved to San Mateo, California, by the time I came around. She had family somewhere around there, I guess—a brother and a sister. She originally came over to the United States to work for her aunt in Connecticut and then headed west later on. She spent time up in Butte, Montana, and while she was there, she met and married Will McDonald in Anaconda.

That's where all the Irish had headed—to Montana. Then together they went to Colorado where my dad was born. My grandfather eventually headed south to Goldfield after they busted up the unions in Victor, Colorado and a year or so later my grandmother and dad went there to catch up with him, but he had already moved on. My dad was really very close to his mother as a young man.

My dad's dad roamed around in the state of Nevada whenever he could, which was all the time, I suppose, looking for gold or silver, looking



Bob's father, Joe McDonald Sr.



From left, Bob, Leola, and Joe Jr., ca. 1922.

for mines and taking jobs in mines, but he was never, as I understand it, with the family after he left Colorado. I never met him, but when he died I was awful young, maybe about eight years old, and my dad drove us to Las Vegas to bury him.

Another time that we drove south was when we went down to Tonopah, and out in the middle of the desert we found a great big tortoise, and we brought him home. We tied him to one of those plum trees I mentioned. We drilled a hole in his back, which, of course, didn't touch him because it was just through the back of the shell, and then we tied a rope through it and tied him to the tree. He was probably a foot and a half square. We'd feed him anything he'd eat, and he'd eat anything. He'd eat the grass, and he'd eat the dirt out in the alley if he could. He dug up everything. I don't really know exactly what he

was fed, but there wasn't any diet. He just liked to eat and dig, then go away. It was amazing when he'd break the rope some way, or somebody would turn him loose, how slow this tortoise was. He could be down at the end of the block in the alley at the end of the day and the next morning, that's where you'd find him! He would roam and roam and roam, but you'd always find him. [laughter] We had to have had him a good eight months to a year. I don't know what happened to him, and they live a long time!

Miss Jessie Beck taught first grade. She was a fine lady and was just like everybody's mother. She took good care of us, we all loved and minded her, and I can't remember getting in any trouble with her! She had grayish-black hair, and I think she was a little taller than the average woman, and she was one of my favorite teachers. She was strict but real nice.



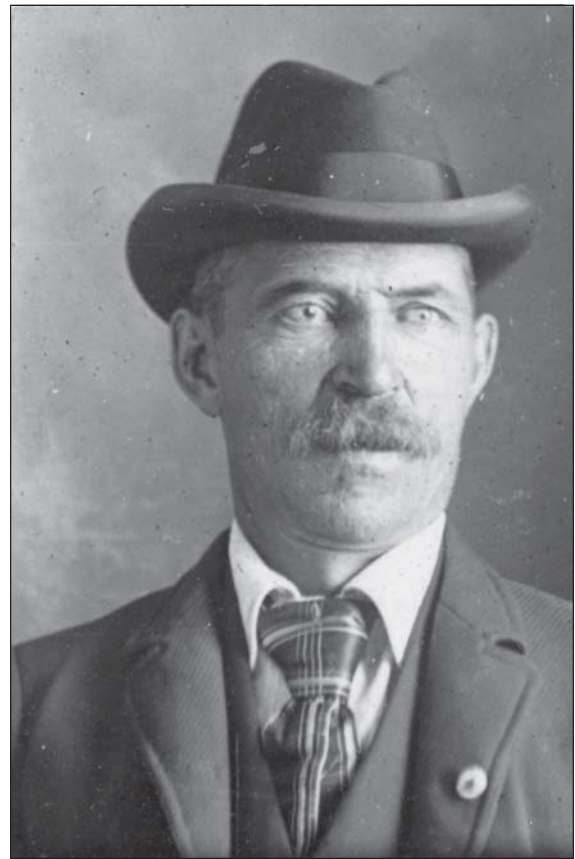
Bob's grandmother, Cecelia Kellegher McDonald, ca. 1930.

Don Zunini was in my class. Herman Menke was in my class, and at different times, like in junior high, high school, and various places, the Melarkey family was somewhere in the class, or getting into the class, or getting away from the class. [laughter] We didn't do any homework in grammar school. We weren't ever given work to take home, and we didn't do chores after school so much as running around the neighborhood.

A lot of us that went to Southside School from my neighborhood weren't all in the same grade, but we played various games together lots of times after school. We'd play marbles for keeps over by Menke's house. We'd play kick the can,

and we'd try to get into the ditch [Cochran Ditch] that ran across and under Virginia Street and up toward Steiner [now St. Lawrence Avenue]. We'd throw things in the ditch, and we'd swim in it—sometimes with our clothes on and sometimes with our clothes off.

Our parents never said *not* to play in the ditch—they just said not to go *over* there. I'm sure they didn't want us playing there, but everybody did it, especially the Melarkeys, George Carr and me. George lived right across the street from me on Virginia Street, and his dad was a dentist. The Melarkeys were next door to them, and through the middle came the ditch, which flowed from Center to Thoma Street, crossed underneath Virginia Street, and went between Malarkey's and Carr's houses. That was where we had all our fun and trouble, doing things we shouldn't do, getting



Bob's grandfather, Willard F. McDonald, ca. 1890.



Miss Jessie Beck with her first grade class at South Side Elementary, ca. 1926. Bob is in the third row, 8th from the left.

caught, and being penalized a little bit, but we never did harm anybody as such. We did get rocks in the street and all those little things, but nobody was ever hurt.

We mostly swam in the ditch, and we'd walk across in the water. Once in awhile I'd put a board in there and use it to go across, but it wasn't that big of a ditch—about eight feet at its widest place. We fished for crawdads with a string and a piece of meat we got from the butcher. I don't think there were any girls in the neighborhood at that time that ever got in the ditch. The ditch was pretty rough, the bottom of it, because there were lots of rocks, and it was pretty rough for a girl, so I don't think they enjoyed playing there.

There was one incident where Herman Menke, who was about five years old at the time, fell into the ditch before it got to Virginia Street. He was floating underneath Virginia Street, and Mr. Nash, who lived in the neighborhood, opened

up the cover and pulled the boy out as he was going past him to keep him from drowning. He would have drowned, in my opinion, if this man hadn't reached out and got him by the neck and pulled him out onto the street. It was dangerous playing around the ditch, but we were careful.

We did a lot around the neighborhood. Besides doing a lot of rock throwing, we did a lot of stealing, like fruit out of other people's yards. We'd play around outside whenever we could, which was mostly in the summertime but also when the weather was decent during the fall and spring.

In the winter we got a lot more snow than what we're getting now. We did a lot of sledding in Reno, and we were towed behind cars with a rope on the bumper that we could let go of. As a matter of fact, my dad would tow us. I'd throw a rope tow ball around the rear bumper, lay on my belly, or sit and hold on, while my dad would

haul me all over on my sled. It wasn't crowded on the streets like it is today, so we could do it. The Melarkeys' dad or mother would also tow us all around town, but we didn't go where there was a lot of traffic. We'd get off of Virginia Street on some of the side streets, and we never had any problem with automobiles.

We didn't have cars to worry about on Ralston Street hill because it was always blocked off every winter if there was any snow. That was a ski area for anybody from the top of the hill down, and it was very steep. I'd go down that on a sled and get down to the bottom, and I'd go up in the air five feet off the ground and land in a snow pile. [laughter] It was a very popular place. Maybe somebody sprained an ankle or something, but nobody ever got seriously hurt. Otherwise, when it got cold we'd stay inside and do what everybody else would do—just listen to the radio if there was anything we enjoyed from it, and sometimes we'd read.

The schools would be closed lots of times with snow, and sometimes if I was using a bicycle, well, I couldn't ride up to school because it was too slippery or too deep. My mother couldn't drive us up there to Southside because of the depth of the snow, so we'd wait maybe till eleven o'clock or noon or one o'clock before we would venture anywhere. There were many, many days we didn't get into those schools because of the deep snow.

We heated our house by a furnace in the basement where we'd put in firewood or coal. The coal would go in there and burn for a long time and push the heat up through vents in the various rooms. If I happened to be home and my mother and dad got loud enough telling me to, I'd go down and stoke the fire, but I never volunteered to do it, although I had various other chores. I had to pull weeds out of the flower beds, but all in all, I wasn't very much of a good weed puller, either. I'd also go to the store when I was asked to. Normally my mother would call up to

the store or give me a list, whichever one, and she'd give me the money. I'd go over to the store, pay for it, bring home the food or whatever else I bought, and give her the change.

My mother stayed at home when she worked. She had her typewriter right in the house. She was the society editor for the *Reno Evening Gazette* or the *Nevada State Journal*—my mother and dad worked at both papers. Most of my dad's time was spent on the *Nevada State Journal*. When I was young, he was just a reporter, but before it was over, he was the top man at the *Journal*, the editor. When my mother worked at home she wore just the normal clothes that any lady at that age would wear—dresses, mostly. She kept her light shoes on and sat where the heat came out of the basement near the vent, so she never got cold. She'd sit there with the phone to her right, and the typewriter in the middle. She'd just call people and write things down and then type them out or



Leola holding Bob, ca. 1922.

type while they were talking. They were all good typists, you know.

She would have coffee with her meal and probably, as I recall, tea once in a while, but she never did have coffee by the typewriter or anything like that. She didn't smoke, either. Just in her later years she smoked once in a while, but it was very, very seldom. She'd have a cocktail occasionally just before dinner, but that's the only time she ever drank.

My mother was neat. She was just a good stay-at-home mother who helped us, but she was pounding on that typewriter all the time. She knew about girls, and she knew most of my girlfriends and would invite them in and be a friend. She probably knew more about them than I did, and she was very broadminded about girls. We had a right to go out with them. She would say, "Be sure you're home at midnight," or ten o'clock or whatever it was, but she never examined me.

As I was walking up those stairs and said, "Good night," I had to go through the damn bedroom of theirs. I couldn't go by without them hearing me.

"Is that you or Bob?" [laughter] It was dark, you know.

My mother was very easy to talk to, but once in a while, she'd be working on a very important story, and if I wanted to get the keys to the car, or get some money to go across the street to get a candy bar, well, she wouldn't answer me, and pretty soon she'd tell me to be quiet. That's when I became quiet, but, overall, she wasn't a disciplinarian and I wasn't afraid of her. Oh, she'd get mad, but she never did strike anybody. I'd see her cry a few times when she'd get really mad, but I never saw her have a fight of any kind with my dad, verbal or anything else. I don't think they ever had one, in front of me, anyway.

My dad came out of the mining community—very innocent, unsophisticated people. They were just good, hardworking folks that came from those towns. Most of them had

come into Nevada on the trains or hitchhiking and would get jobs in the mines. It must've been very interesting, although I never did pay much attention to the stories my dad shared about his life out there until I read his oral history.

They were kind of an unusual bunch of people, but they were also all pretty similar. They had one lady in Rawhide that was well-known for drinking more than she should, and she'd walk down the streets backwards and go into the bars. One time she was walking backwards on the sidewalk—because that's what she did when she got drunk—and those sidewalks were six, eight inches taller than the average one here in Reno. She missed a step and fell down and hit the back of her head on a rock, and it killed her. They had a big wake, and everybody in town was upset. That's how popular she was.

I think my father was a really good dad. God Almighty, he couldn't have been better. It took a



Bob and Joe Sr. on Incline Beach, ca. 1922.

lot to make my father mad, and he was very understanding. If we did things that were wrong, we'd get talked to, but he never put us in the basement or told us we couldn't go here or we couldn't go there, but he didn't allow certain things to be done. He'd tell you, "No more," and that was that. He was very good at it, and so was my mother. They both disciplined us, but I'd hear her lots of times telling him to do something about us because, "Joe did this yesterday, and you've got to talk to him." She didn't do it, but instead she'd tell *him* to go get at my brother or me. So I'd say he was the main disciplinarian, but he wasn't mean, either, to us. I mean, he was soft on us.

My father was gentle except for when he got *really* angry. He was a very devout Irish Catholic but a very broad-minded one, and to raise my brother and me, he had to be that type of person. I think he kind of liked us that way, or understood us, because he came up in a hard time in those mining camps and towns. There were fights out in that Tonopah area and out in all those joints where he was living, but he himself wasn't a scrapper. The one thing we had to be sure of was that we treated my mother like a lady. He had a lot of respect for ladies, all because of his mother, obviously. He was very much a "mother's son," since his father was out in some mine somewhere, and he never did see him.

My dad might slap us one time if we used bad words in front of our mother, but if we ever *called* her some of those things, he'd belt us one, and we were in trouble. If we said them to him, it was normal. What I mean is that he'd maybe tell us to shut up or whacked me one little one or something, but if we ever started bothering her with dirty language, talking back or telling her to go to hell or, "Get out of my way," or something, we had better be ready to fight, because he didn't like that. Oh boy, he was devoted to her. Of course, you're supposed to be, but he just loved her.



Leola and Joe Sr. standing in the middle of the Truckee River, ca. 1916.

Mine was a non-drinking family, and by that I mean my mother didn't drink, and my dad didn't drink. When he was younger, I think my dad would drink, but he had a bad stomach illness—ulcers, and his guts were blocked to where he even had surgery on them during his time at the University of Nevada—so he stopped. They didn't think it was the world's worst thing to have alcohol because my mother had brothers, and I'm certain some of them had their share of booze. My grandparents were not drinking people, but they wouldn't say a person was bad because he had a drink.

My dad was working at one time for the Sanford family, and they were very strict people. Graham Sanford owned the *Reno Evening Gazette*. He was very honorable, but I got a certain pay as a paper boy, and that was it. I never did get along

with them because during most of my childhood I had a paper route, and I wasn't the most honorable newspaper boy. I was good at it—stole everything I could get my hands on.

I always did something with papers, and no, my dad didn't keep us employed at the newspapers. As a matter of fact, I got fired. We were supposed to deliver the papers to the people's houses that had paid for a subscription, but I knew the guy that was head of the papers downstairs in the *Reno Gazette* building. He would always give me ten or twelve extra papers when I'd leave in the afternoon, and I'd go right to Chism's Auto Camp where a lot of people lived, and I'd sell them the paper. It was all profit, because I didn't pay for the papers. They all liked me because I would chat with them, and I'd sell them a nickel paper for sometimes a dime, sometimes twenty cents or even thirty cents. A lot of them that lived in that trailer park spent their entire lives there. Instead of calling the newspaper company and getting it delivered, I'd take it to them. Then, just all of a sudden for no particular reason, two or three of them decided they'd change and get it delivered the right way. They'd tell the story to the *Gazette*, and then that's how they finally found out that Bob McDonald was stealing the papers. Paul Shea fired me, and my dad wouldn't help me. [laughter] He said, "You had it coming."

But Bill Graham was great to me during the Dempsey-Tunney fights, and I'd go into the Bank Club because the *Nevada State Journal* put out an extra. He let me go through his club and get a silver dollar for every paper I sold.

Chism Ice Cream was the number one ice cream company in the state of Nevada at the time, because Las Vegas wasn't very big then. The Chisms, who owned the company, were classmates of my parents at the University of Nevada, and they would play cards together once in a while and go to different shows together. Chism Ice Cream was sold in all the stores, and

us kids could go in there and get a job if they could squeeze us in. They were just great, great people—wonderful people and close friends of my mother and dad throughout high school, college, and afterward.

I had a great neighborhood. At the top of the hill up from me, where California ends at Virginia, was the Osen Motor Company that sold Dodge automobiles and did a lot of repair work for this group. Across the street from Osen's lived the Sullivan family, and there were four boys, all outstanding people. One of them ended up working for the state, another one went to medical school, and the father was a doctor. If anybody got cut while we were playing in the field next door, they never went anywhere but just to see Dr. Sullivan, because that's where his office was anyway, so that was always handy.

There was a big grass area between the Sullivans' and the Melarkeys', and that field was where all the football and everything rough were played. We didn't exactly have teams, but we'd draw, and we were on a different team every time. We had one girl, who played a lot, and her name was Earmond Baker, and she was a very close friend of mine and was a year ahead of me, and she was the best running back out of everybody in the field. She made more touchdowns than any of us. She ran like a deer. Somebody told me later that her dad was complaining a lot about her playing, but she never did stop. The last time I saw her out of high school, she was still playing. She was a good student and a real athlete, and she ended up playing tennis for the University of Nevada.

Sam Francovich's family was a block and a half towards town on Center Street and across from Southside School, and he was a great friend of mine. He was my classmate starting at Southside School and on through high school, and he would come down to our neighborhood, and we'd go up to his. Sam became a good lawyer. He was city attorney and honorable, too—very

popular. He was in the legislature as an assemblyman, and his widow still lives here in Reno on Mark Twain.

Sam Francovich's uncle had a casino down on Commercial Row, the Wine Bar, and it was very popular with the elderly people. At his uncle's request—and we were excited to do it—we used to go out where Stead Air Base [Reno-Stead Airport] is now and kill jackrabbits so he could serve them in his restaurant. He would hand us one, two or three dollars and say, "Here's something. Go out and shoot yourself some rabbits." [laughter] That was how he paid us for rabbit hunting. They were good eating. He was a fine man, and sometimes he would even give us the shotgun shells and pay us twenty cents a rabbit. Eventually a disease hit the rabbits along here and to Elko, so we quit.

In the neighborhood, we'd have some ups and downs once in a while, like somebody getting caught probably taking an extra something out of the grocery store, but we did do one thing that was kind of exciting and legal—we had a lot of boxing. My dad brought us home large boxing gloves that seemed enormous. They'd hurt if you hit somebody hard enough, but they were big enough and soft enough where nobody ever *really* got hurt. We used to have boxing matches with the various kids around the neighborhood and actually kind of had tournaments out in my backyard where we had a referee. It was pretty good fun.

Reno was a great small town, and we knew everybody. I knew all the policemen, and they all knew me by my first name. They were a very helpful police department then with the kids. No matter what we got caught doing, if it was within reason, they took care of us. They'd help us, lecture us, and would say, "Now you better go home."

If they saw me walking down Virginia Street fighting with my girlfriend, Gloria, when she's on one side of the street and I'm on the other,

and we're yelling at each other, they'd come and load us both in the car and take us home or get us back together.

We used to fish in the river right across from the Riverside Hotel, and it was great fishing there, but if I got caught fishing by the dam, which was against the law, the game warden, Brownie, would take my rod away from me. He lived about five or six blocks south of us on South Virginia. He said, "When you want to go fishing again, you can come out and pick up your pole at my house." [laughter] I never got a ticket. I just had to walk out and get my rod and go fishing again. That's kind of the way Reno was. All the people were just nice.

Jimmy Melarkey was my neighbor, and he had an older brother that was exactly my age named Dave. Jim was only a year or so younger than us, and he was just a wonderful person. I mean, he was loved by everybody. He was a great



Gloria E. Peck, ca. 1935.

basketball player despite his small stature, because he was fast, and he was devoted. He had a coffee can with the bottom knocked out of it nailed to his garage in his backyard, and he used a tennis ball. He would practice on that a minimum of an hour every day, and sometimes you'd look over there, and he'd be there all morning or all afternoon. I can't really remember him being so outstanding in high school, but when he got to the University of Nevada, he was on the varsity team and was unbelievable. When they went back to play some team in New York at Madison Square Garden, he was the star of the game, and everything he did was perfect. He was a lot smaller, but he was shooting all around those defensive ball players, and they were still going in and around him, but they couldn't stop him, so he was pretty well noted for that particular game against St. John's on that particular day. He had a great jump shot, and he was a good golfer, too. He married an Italian girl here, Betty Avansino, and they'd grown up and gone to school together. He'd been happily married to her forever, probably around sixty years, until he passed away.

I remember his mother and dad very well because of them being in the neighborhood, and we hung out in their house—especially my brother and myself, but probably more me than anybody. I'd known Mr. Melarkey—his nickname was Kink—probably since I was born, and I still don't know what he did for a living. He would leave in the mornings around six, seven o'clock a.m. and go to Yerington. In those days, you didn't ask. I mean, I wasn't interested in what Dave and Jimmy's dad did, but he was a wonderful person, a good solid citizen. Their mother, Alice, was a competitor with my mother, who was society editor at that time for the *Reno Evening Gazette*; his mother was with the *Nevada State Journal*, and then they switched around, but they both remained as society editors for many, many years. They were very competitive, and at the end of

the day, or the end of the next day, they were friends again, but it got kind of sticky once in a while.

They'd compete over whatever was happening that was of societal interest in the state of Nevada or with a particular individual involved—for example, somebody getting married or somebody having a baby. They didn't do anything that was going to harm someone's reputation, and if somebody got arrested for drinking too much, that didn't bother them because they didn't use that type of a story. They just wrote nice things, such as what the people were doing to the neighborhood, doing for the city, and in the women's clubs. There were a lot of those clubs in Reno, and they'd have meetings, just like the men's Rotary Club, but this was the ladies. Those were always in the paper, and it was about who was there, what they ate, what they wore, and what they said at those women's society luncheons.

Alice Melarkey went downtown, sometimes, but my mother did all her work at home. My dad, of course, was working on the paper downtown, so it worked out good, and when he walked to work he would bring my mother's copy to the newspaper. If she went downtown, she would drive, but she very seldom went down there.

Well, you know women—they're talking all the time. They're talking about each other and with each other, and anything my mother and Mrs. Melarkey found that would be interesting for the newspaper, they'd put it in their article. If they didn't get it from their friends, once in a while one of us would say something—"Billy's mother had a baby last night"—and, boy, my mother was on the phone right away getting the baby's name, where it was born. [laughter] They just did everything they could to find out about people, but it was always positive. They were never critical of anybody. For many reasons neither one of them are noted for doing anything like that, and besides, I imagine that they didn't want to be sued

if they said something that was bad because the newspaper could be sued for libel.

I don't recall families having too many dinner parties, but if any of the kids were at my house and it was time for lunch or dinner, and they wanted to eat, my mother would feed them. That's about the way most everyone in my neighborhood did it. Of course on Center Street we had a special kind, I think, because they were all just good, solid people like Al Conton and his family that lived down the block. The Contons were just one block away on the corner of Center and Thoma Street, so we did a lot of things together. In those four square blocks, we had a lot of young people, and I think that's what helped all our families stay pretty friendly.

Christmas has always been a special holiday for our family, and it was always big. Until I was

twenty, I think I still thought Santa Claus came down the chimney. [laughter] We'd have Christmas at home, but we'd all go out to Sparks for Christmas dinner, too, with the cousins, aunts, and uncles. My mother's sister, Eleanor, and a brother, Jack, were there. Lou O'Neal was married to Eleanor, and he was the uncle that I fished and hunted with.

On Easter Sunday sometimes we'd go out to Idlewild Park for Easter egg hunts, and they'd be spread all around out there. You've got to remember, there weren't as many people as there are now. My dad would take us out there, and we'd bring home candy and some hardboiled eggs—very few of those.

There is a picture of my brother, Joe, who is in front of the platform where Charles Lindbergh is standing with the dignitaries of Reno on September 19, 1927 at Idlewild Park. I recall that Lindbergh's airplane landed at the Washoe golf course, which was then called Blanch Field, and I was there with my dad and brother.

Another member of our family was our dog named King, who was a big, well-built German police dog. He was originally owned by a lady who ran a beauty parlor, and she was told to take her dog out of her shop when the building where she had her parlor was sold. She knew my mother and my dad and asked them if they wanted the dog, and they said, "Yes." We got him before he was a full year old, and he became a real part of our family. He did things that were unbelievable to most people. For example, he walked, or ran, from Zephyr Cove at Lake Tahoe over the Sierra Nevada Mountains through Carson City, down to Bowers Mansion, et cetera, and back to our house in Reno.

The reason he did that was because in the summer my mother used to take us—my brother, me, and whomever else—fishing up at Lake Tahoe. We'd take the dog along, but he would invariably get tangled up in the line somewhere or hooked by a fish hook, so this one time we



Tubby Schroeder and Al Conton, ca. 1937.



Joe McDonald Jr., kneeling on the right, during the Easter festivities at Idlewild Park, ca. 1922.

locked him in the upstairs room in our cabin at Zephyr Cove. My dad had already gone back to Reno after the weekend to go to work while we stayed with my mother. We had come back to the cabin from fishing, and the second-story window had been broken—not only the glass, but every part of it. Down at the bottom of the house I could see four footprints in the dirt where the dog had landed, but we couldn't find the dog, and we looked everywhere. Two days later my dad came home from work, and opened the screen door to the front entry porch of our house, and King was sitting at the front door. His feet were all beat up, but other than that he was in fine shape.

King was just a very popular animal, and he never did get in any real dog fights. He never would attack or bite people, except for the

mailman. I guess we had to get a post office box, but, anyway, he'd always come to anybody he could that would talk to him. He was just a wonderful dog, and he would do such things as you'd tell him to. For example, the Piggly-Wiggly grocery store was big in those days, kind of like a Safeway is today. We lived on the east side of Virginia Street, and when my mother needed something at the store, she would open the front door and tell King to go over to the Piggly-Wiggly and pick up something. "It'll be ready for you." My mother would call the Piggly-Wiggly, and Bill, the grocer, would be ready with whatever grocery it was by bundling and rolling it up in a sack, and hand it to King out the door. King would look both ways to see if there were any cars coming, and then he'd walk back across the street and lay it down by the tree. King could bring back a loaf



King with Bob at their house on South Virginia Street, ca. 1935.

of bread without ever eating it, but everything he brought back he would bring right up in the front yard, lay it down by one of our big trees that was in the front yard, push it right up against the edge, lift his leg and urinate on it, pick it up and bring it in the house. Everything that he could get in his mouth he would do that to. We had him until he must have been twelve or thirteen years old. He got so he couldn't get around because his back legs quit working, so we had him put down.

We went to Zephyr Cove every summer. We stayed up there most of the summer, and my dad would come up weekends. We knew a lot of the folks that had homes up there on the beach and close by, and we met a lot of people up there. We had friends up there that also came for the weekends. "Si" Ross was a friend of my family and especially with my dad. They had a house

right down on the beach, and they were close to us, so we'd go down and chat with them once in awhile as we were walking by to go swimming, and my parents would visit with them when they were up there. We also knew some people from Gardnerville.

My mother enjoyed being up there in the summer by herself in the cabin with the kids, although she never did go to the beach, except maybe she'd bring an umbrella and sit there for awhile, but very little. She was up there almost all of the summer for several years because that's where we kids wanted to be. She'd have people from Oakland come up that she had known when she attended the University of Nevada, and one of the family names was Blair. My mother didn't do any sporting things, but she liked it there. Joe and I would swim mostly, and I'd fish when I could. There were other kids that we were friends



Bob, Leola, and friends at Zephyr Cove.

with, and we'd go together to dive off of that pier. It seemed like it was quite a walk up north to the pier, maybe a quarter of a mile on the beach.

I have no idea how my dad got that little house at Zephyr Cove, but he paid \$2900 for the house and the lot. I think he just knew somebody, and that was the price it had, and they let him pay the way he could—a little here and a little there until eventually he paid it off. He bought it in 1928, and we lived in it for many, many summers. The upstairs had plenty of sleeping space as well as the downstairs and in the living room, so it was a good spot for having my friends come up all the time. We always had somebody, guests and family, in that house, but in the wintertime the house was boarded up, and we never went near it. We didn't go to Lake Tahoe just because there wasn't much help for the snow on the roads. The snow was tough, and people just didn't drive that far in those days, so we never went there in the winter because of the bad weather.

My brother and I had nicknames up there. I was "Big Toe," and he was "Blackie." The "Big Toe" name came from me stubbing, many times, my big toe by catching it on a rock or something, and it was usually bleeding or wrapped. My brother's nickname was "Blackie" because that's the way his skin tanned just by him doing anything outside—be it swimming or being on the beach. His typical skin turned black, instead of brown as most people's does. It was absolutely a dark color, his back and his face just from the sun, so he was nicknamed by some people up there, probably the girls. Blackie was really tan. [laughter]

The Boy Scout camp was above and back on the east side of the highway up on that west side of the mountain, and there were a lot of kids from Reno, including me and my brother, that would move up there in the summertime and live in tents if they could get by with it. The tents were tied onto a flat, solid, wooden deck.

During high school, a lot of Reno kids hung around Tahoe. They would hitchhike from Reno or Carson and get up to Zephyr Cove, which was always popular, because of the swimming there. The water wasn't deep close to the shore, so someone could easily wade out to swim. There was a big buoy that we could swim to out in the water that was a quarter of a mile away, probably, which wasn't very difficult, and there was that pier with the diving board north of us on the beach. It was just a wonderful place for a summer vacation. There was one restaurant there at the Zephyr Cove Lodge, but most young people camped out, barbecued, and brought sandwiches and Coca Cola. It was a great time for young people. They had places to play horseshoes, too. I think that Lake Tahoe had a big influence on my life.

The Gallues had horses up there, and we could rent them and go riding up in the mountains or on the beach. These kids that had the horses had stables to keep them in on the other side of the road where the Boy Scout camp was. At Zephyr Cove they'd run the horses out onto the pier, ride them all the way out to the end of the pier, and the horses would keep going. The horse would dive in, and I'd sit on him all the way and go in the water and then get off and swim into shore, or swim into the pier. They'd ride us right into the water, and that drew people from all over to watch. [laughter] That was kind of a fun thing. One of the boys that owned the horses was named Hank Gallues—he later was an officer at First National Bank of Nevada—and he had a brother, Albert, who I went to high school with, and he was a real wonderful person—he and his brother both. His brother was more of a rowdy type of person than Hank, but he was still a good guy, a good person and highly thought of. They rode the horses at Zephyr Cove all the time, and there were no restrictions. We didn't have to get permits or anything like that to ride a horse up and down the beach, and nobody cared. We could

do almost anything there, and there wasn't much traffic, so we were safe all the time.

When my dad could get any time off, he'd get us up there and then leave my mother and us while he went back to work, and she would take care of us. We'd go in the car, which I think was a Chevrolet, and it would take two and a half hours. We'd drive through Carson to get there, and it's the same way we go now. The way we usually went was by going through Carson down to Minden, turning right, and going up Kingsbury Grade, and that would take us out to the south end of Lake Tahoe, and from there we would turn right and drive up to Zephyr Cove. Sometimes we'd drive down to Cave Rock, but in those days you'd go around Cave Rock rather than through it. The road around the lake was gravel, easy to drive, a good road, and there were a lot of trails in the mountains where we could walk, even barefooted if we wanted to. There were just a lot of things for young people to do up at Lake Tahoe, especially in that area from Glenbrook to Cave Rock and toward Zephyr Cove, because it was really inviting and safe, and people loved to go there for that very reason.

From Reno, another place a person could go was to the north side of Lake Tahoe by heading west through Truckee from Highway 40, going north and turning left onto the Lincoln Highway [Highway 89], and ending up at the Tahoe Tavern. But that wasn't anywhere near Zephyr Cove, and our destination was always Zephyr Cove. Always! I didn't know anywhere else, hardly.

There was a gas station up there at Zephyr Cove that Wiley ran. He had it all—everything—and he was very keen with it. I worked for him for one summer, my job was to run around there, pick up papers and cigarette butts and anything that made a little dirt. I'd run around with a bucket, pick it up, and then go dump it out. I think he paid me every day. I was about twelve at the time.

As far as I can recall, we always had a telephone in our home, but there was no



The McDonalds' cabin at Zephyr Cove

telephone at Lake Tahoe. We'd go over to Mr. Wiley's grocery store and borrow the phone there. They'd charge you something for long distance, but if it was local, I'm certain it was free. We'd get some of our supplies there, but most of the groceries that we had in our cabin we brought up from Reno. Every weekend we went up there, so we'd always bring some fresh produce with us, and a lot of the time we stayed through the week but had quite a bit of food stocked in our pantry. Once in awhile we'd run out of milk and things that we had to go to the store for, but we hardly ever came down to Reno, unless there was something that we *had* to go back there for. Other than that, we stayed up there most all the time, but my dad would come back and forth on the weekends. My mother lived there with us, of course.

I think the biggest break a young person could get is being taught to live, work, and spend time on Lake Tahoe. The Nevada side was much more

liberal than the California side with what someone could do on the beach and what we could do with our boat and things of that nature. Zephyr Cove and that area were, in general, much more loose than the California side. There were always people guarding the California side. They couldn't stop us from driving an automobile around or anything, but when we'd stop and go out on a pier or stop to go into the lake swimming, there wasn't public access. Somebody always said, "That's our part of the lake," so they'd run us off from the beachfront of their home, and I guess we couldn't be there. Now, they couldn't stop us when we'd come in from the water and sit out there in the boat and make fun of them. [laughter] Well, they said they owned the beachfront. I think California had more privately owned beaches than the Nevada side.

Lake Tahoe was and still is a wonderful place to go. We had a canoe, we had a row boat, and we

had an engine for the row boat which was good enough to pull a skier, so we did waterskiing, and we did a lot of fishing. The one thing about that side of Lake Tahoe then that I knew of was the good fishing by trolling in a boat and trolling in deep water at maybe thirty, forty, fifty feet. I'd let my bait go down to the bottom and then reel it up a little bit and drive the boat very slowly around that area, and I'd catch big Rainbow Trout. I was the one that did a lot of fishing, probably more than most of them, because I liked it a lot. I knew where the fish were, and I was very fortunate at catching fish. There was a lady and her husband with two daughters who lived up there all summer—the Hess family from Burlingame, California—and the mother was a great fishing lady. Her husband couldn't come up there during the summer very much because of his job, but she fished almost every day.

She knew every fish at Lake Tahoe, I think, and while I didn't go with her, she showed me where to go. She could catch fish when nobody could catch fish, and she used some minnows that she would catch in a pen. You know, we all had minnow traps. We put some bait in, put the pen down into the water, and dropped it on the bottom, and the minnows would swim in and then couldn't get out. That was the best bait, really. She had a little boat with motor on it, but she did a lot of rowing, too. If she wasn't going out far, normally she'd row out there probably just for the exercise, looking back on it. She was a real nice lady. She didn't hang out on the beach much, but if she wasn't fishing, spent was most of the time in her house there.

Oh, the fish! They were the best eating fish in the world. Freshest water in the world, and the fish were delicious. Everybody ate those fish. We'd



Bob and a friend canoeing in Zephyr Cove

cook them every way by baking them in the oven, frying on the stove, or getting some going out on the barbecue in the backyard.

Virginia was one of those girls in the Hess family. I knew her for a long time, and we used to exchange letters when everybody went back to school. She was in high school in California when I was in Reno, and then I'd see her every summer, and we kind of liked each other. [laughter] Her sister's name was Audrey, and she was a gorgeous girl—pretty. Then Virginia went all through Cal, and I kind of kept track of her up to about her junior year. I quit going to the lake because of the war, and then I don't know what happened to her. She was a good gal, and her mom was a great lady—one of the finest fishing people I ever knew.

People sat on the beach and sunbathed by the hundreds at Zephyr Cove and all around Lake Tahoe. Further north up the shoreline on the Nevada side was where girls swam naked. They'd lie on the beach, and then they would go swimming. When they'd go in the water, we'd go up in my boat with the outboard from Zephyr Cove. It was right between Cave Rock and Zephyr Cove, and the beach was about half a block long, and we'd just go up there to boat all the time and talk to them, but you never could see them there. All we'd do is talk to their head, most of them, because they were wading in the water. [laughter] We'd ride around there, and then say "Let's get out of here!" We'd just drive right through the middle of them and wave. [laughter]

Well, everybody that could either hitchhiked, came with their friends, or in their own car to Lake Tahoe, and they'd always go to one of two places—the east side of the lake to Zephyr Cove coming from Carson, or maybe down to Stateline. They'd come from Reno to that part of the lake and when they headed home they turned left to go over the mountain and come out at Minden, and sometimes they would stop in and eat at Minden.

Later on during college, Warren Hart and Jerry Wetzel would get tents and set them up on the other side of the road somewhere. I don't recall too much where they stayed, but they were up there at Zephyr Cove a lot. They'd go up on a Friday afternoon and come back early Sunday morning. They came up on their own, as far as I know. Jerry Wetzel eventually started his rental business up there on the Zephyr Cove beach at the north side of the pier.

Hitchhiking was a very normal mode of transportation for most young people. We all hitchhiked all the time and even some of the girls did. There were no trains going to the lake. Back then there was the U.S.S. Tahoe that would go around the lake, and people could pay to get a ride on it. Of course the Boy Scouts always had a ride around the lake. That was part of their scout camp, to ride around the entire lake in the big boat and stop at various places and maybe have a Coke or do something like that. It would cover the entire lake, both ends, both sides.

We got caught at Zephyr Cove Lodge playing slugs in the slot machines. The Bennetts were some gamblers that lived off of Center Street, and their basement was just about two and a half blocks from our house in Reno. They were slot route operators around Reno and Lake Tahoe, and they kept the machines that needed a little work down in their basement. They also had lots and lots of slugs because they'd take them out of their slot machines from the Palace Club and other various joints around Nevada and put them down there, too, and we found that out. They made the mistake of taking a vacation one summer. [laughter] My brother and I knew where the slot machines and slugs were because we'd seen them through the window as we walked by, so while they were gone I crawled into the basement. That was the one time I used my tool box—to break into the window and everything—I don't think that I've ever owned a tool box since. [laughter] My brother and I used it to get those

slugs. They had me do it because I was smaller, and Joe was outside on the grass. I just threw the bags out, and he put them into a bigger sack with another fellow, and the three of us removed a lot.

Slot machines in those days took slugs that were worthless. We'd play them to get the machines to pay out real coins on the California side, and we'd pull them until they started paying slugs. We played them up at Lake Tahoe at the big resorts—Tahoe Tavern, all of them. Then we'd go to the next one, the next place, or the next town.

We finally got around to the Nevada side, and we went into the Zephyr Cove Lodge, and the owner there caught us. My dad happened to be up for that weekend, and it was kind of cute the way my dad handled it. Wiley caught us playing, and he told us, "Stay right here." He went over and found my dad at our cabin, and he said, "Joe, I want you to know this." He said we were putting slugs in his slot machines, and then Wiley brought my dad back to the store, which was about a block and a half, and started jumping on him and using bad language. He was really raising hell.

My dad allowed him to talk for awhile, and he said, "Just a minute. [laughter] Now, you listen to me. You knew these kids were playing the slot machines, didn't you? How old do you think they are? You allowed them to play, didn't you? *So how old do you think they are?* They're juveniles. Do they have any right to play these machines at all? Well, you better keep your mouth shut then, because they're not allowed to play these machines, and you allowed them."

And Wiley said, "That's why you're here, because they're underage."

So my dad said, "You know that you've got to be twenty-one years old to play the slot machine, and you thought you were getting their good money, so you allowed them to play as young kids until you realized they were using slugs! So don't be crying to me. Now, I don't want to hear

any more about it, and this is the end! They won't play them anymore."

That pretty well ended it. My dad threatened him in a backhanded sort of way, but he let him know that he was serious, and he didn't want to talk about it anymore. It was all over, and then Wiley wanted my dad to pay him back all the money that he lost with slugs. [laughter] There was damn near a fight out there, and my dad just took over and said, "That's wrong!" But he didn't let Joe and I get any money out of it either! [laughter] He jumped on us something awful when we got to the cabin, but he didn't move into that guy. He was ready to bust his nose. My mother was upset and just aching over the whole incident.

My dad loaded the slugs into the back of a pick-up truck and put me in there with my brother to go up north of Reno to the desert where Stead is now, almost that far, and dig holes and bury everything. He was driving, so Joe had me sit in the back of the truck and draw a map of where we were going. [laughter] My brother had given me instructions, and he gave me a pencil and a piece of brown paper—probably a paper sack—to trace our way out to where we buried them, and I did that. So I sat back there and drew the map, and we rolled them off the truck and buried them. My brother and I—mostly my brother—dug holes, and we put everything we had in connection with slot machines in these big holes. My dad didn't want us to get into bad trouble, but at the same time he didn't want us to be successful either, so that's the way he did it. But we never did find them again. One time we drove out there, and we gave up because we couldn't find the place. I would guess maybe two, or three years at the most, had passed since we had gone out there. Joe was driving age, and I was probably about twelve or thirteen years old, in that area somewhere.

What else did I use my tool box for? That was about it. I might have hammered something

into the dirt, but I never was much with a tool box. My dad was kind of handy, though, and he was good with all kinds of things. He had tools he'd use to tighten up bolts and stuff like a vise grip and what not, but I was never interested in that. Not a bit. [laughter] I liked to operate the machinery but not fix it.

My granddad, on my mom's side, Mat Lewis, had a cattle ranch out in Spanish Springs. It was probably a couple of hundred acres, and all he used it for was milk cows. He would milk the cows himself, then carry the milk in an old car into Sparks and sell the milk to the dairy. He was an excellent milker. He could sit on that little chair he had and hit a hole in the side of the barn at about thirty feet, and sometimes he'd hit it just to get the flies out of there. He had a great police dog, but the dog got caught in a trap, and he had to kill him, but that was a pretty great dog.

Granddad lived in Sparks with my grandmother, but he'd stay at the ranch at least a

week at a time, and he went all by himself. None of his own kids were ever involved in his ranch, and I never did understand that. They were all doing something else, and it seemed that I was the only one and the only grandchild that'd go out there. I had my own horse, which was really his horse, but he said, "That's for you." He was buckskin, and his name was Buck. [laughter] So I'd get to ride the horse a lot, and I liked that. The summer was the only time I went out there.

Later, when my grandparents got a ranch that ran right along the edge of the Truckee River about ten miles down from Sparks, I'd go fishing there, either with him or one of his sons, on the bank of the river. Lou O'Neal, who was married to his daughter, Eleanor, was quite a fisherman, and I'd go with Uncle Lou all the time.

I went with my granddad one time, and we slept in blankets on the edge of the river. I was going to fish the next morning, and he was going to herd his sheep around and get them where they should be, which he did most every day. We were lying alongside of the water there, twenty feet away or something, and I got up when it got light and was wandering around. I looked down at him, it looked like he was asleep, but he wasn't. He indicated that I better be quiet.

I said, "What's the matter?"

He gave me a dirty look and again motioned for me to be quiet. He waved his hand for me to go away, so I stepped back a ways. He came out from those blankets a step at a time or a sneak at a time. He eventually got out, grabbed his gun, and threw that top blanket over. There was a rattlesnake that had been in bed with him most of the night, and he shot him right there. It didn't bother me too much until I knew what it was, but the last thing I thought of was a rattlesnake! As it turns out, there were a lot of them down there—still are. That's good country for rattlesnakes.

My uncle took me hunting, too. He was a good guy who wasn't from around this part of



Ila Methias Lewis and Clara Beall Lewis, Bob's maternal grandparents.

the country. He worked for the power company, and he was a good hunter and a fisherman. He and my aunt didn't have any children at that time, and my dad didn't hunt or fish because he was always working and never had the time because he was always hustling a job, but I also don't think he had much interest in fishing or hunting, and he didn't believe in hurting anything. That's probably another reason why he didn't hunt. We'd get him in a boat occasionally up at Zephyr Cove, and he'd ride out there, but he was never impressed by people fishing. But, then again, he never did have anybody to take him while he was growing up after his father left for Goldfield.

During the Depression all of our friends and my parents were short on money, and we had to be careful with how we spent it. We took sandwiches to school and didn't go out and do anything other than right around the house. Gambling became legal in 1931, and I know it was kind of exciting that people could now play

games or gamble without violating any laws or anything, but my dad was just a newspaper man. He wasn't a gambler, and he wouldn't gamble a dime. Off the record, he didn't have a dime to gamble. [laughter] I don't ever remember my folks going out for anything hardly other than to play bridge with close friends, and maybe have dinner with them or something of that nature, but that was their only entertainment. During high school, well, I went into the Bank Club once, going through and coming out the other side. We played the slot machine or something like that, but I never actually played twenty-one or craps or anything.

We had a Model A at one time that was pretty well beat up, and we fixed it up some. My brother used it, and I did when he'd let me, although it was more his than mine, but it was in the family, so once in a while I'd get to take it. Albert Conton usually had a car, a Ford sedan, and we'd go in that wherever we wanted most of the time. When



Al Conton's Ford sedan, ca. 1937. From left to right: Tubby Schroeder, Al Conton, Bob, Gloria (sitting inside the car), and Betty Jean Henderson.

I met Gloria she was living with Betty Jean Henderson, and they were good friends. They were in the ninth grade at Billingshurst, and I was in the tenth grade at Reno High. I met her through Betty Jean, since Al was dating Betty Jean. Betty Jean lived close to us then, up at the top of the hill on Steiner at Forest and we'd see her a lot. I don't recall any specific time when I met Gloria, although she remembers meeting me at a Billingshurst dance. I guess I offered her a ride home and she said, "No." [laughter]

We dressed in corduroys, and you'd wear one pair almost the whole semester until your mother made you take them off. They were a light brown color, and they'd get a certain color from the dirt, and they all looked alike. I'd say 75 percent of the guys at Reno High School wore those pants. We wore short sleeved shirts, and most of them were slipovers. I was never a fancy dresser and my mother was always after me for that, but as long as they were clean, she said, "OK."

When I was a little boy my mother liked to dress me very nicely, and I didn't like it when she did—I had to wear shorts when I was real little, but as I grew older I didn't want to wear that type of stuff, and I never did wear anything like that when I started school. When I was older I chose what I wanted to wear as long as it was satisfactory to her, which it was. She was very broad-minded, but I wasn't wearing anything that my friends weren't wearing. The girls wore just plain skirts and sweaters, and they were pretty well covered up.

During the warm months in high school we swam in the Truckee River a lot by the power dam [off Idlewild Drive] where we'd swim in the nude sometimes. It wasn't with girls—just the guys—and we'd spend a lot of time in that area during the summer. If we weren't there, we'd go up to Lake Tahoe.

I played in all of the sports at Reno High School, but I wasn't very good in a lot of them. [laughter] I was successful playing football. I was

a running guard, and I wasn't very fast, but I was exceptionally mean, and I was all-state my senior year and almost a previous year. We practiced every day during the season. Bud Beasley was coaching and then Herb Foster, who was an outstanding coach at the time in the state—highly thought of. He was very quiet, but he demanded discipline at all times, and he didn't allow smoking, although he and his wife both smoked. But he was against smoking. When he caught us he made us get in the center of the entire team in a circle and apologize by saying, "I'm sorry, and I won't do it again." During the two or three years I probably said it a couple of times a year. Not everyone smoked then.

Jim Archer, who was a student pal of mine, and I played football together in high school and did a lot together. He came to Nevada out of Antelope Valley from a California ranch, but he and I were never in grade school together. I got in a little scrap one time when Arch was with me, and the next night, on Monday night, we practiced football. Once again, the coach had the whole team get in a circle, and Archer and I had to come stand right in the middle and apologize to them for fighting and/or drinking, and back to the practice we'd go. Herb Foster yelled at me, but he never kicked me off the team. I don't think he ever kicked anybody off the team.

We played baseball in the summertime for the American Legion and Bud Beasley was our coach. One time we were on a train coming back from a tournament in the Midwest, and while we were returning to Reno, a bunch of us on the team just sat there in the back and teased the ladies and the girls. That was a great time. We probably won one or two games. Another one of the teams we went up against was the Nevada State Prison inmates. That was interesting to me because one of my friends, Randy Booth, was committed to the Nevada State Prison. He went to prison because of some kind of forgery charge that had to do with the railroad. You'd never know that



The Reno High School football team and 1937 State champions. Top row, left to right: Coach Herb Foster, William Curran, Warren Salmon, Dick Meffley, Irvel Carter, Walter Leigh, Gene Francovich, Robert Raine, Otis Vaughn, Bill Harrigan, Bob Moore, John Mirini, Lester Ferguson (manager) and Assistant Coach Bud Beasley. Second row, left to right: Conrad McCloskey, Jim Doyle, Don Burrus, Royce Hardy, Fred DeSomma, Jack Ward, Bill Howard, Fred Forson, Jack Powell, Maurice Parale, Frank Petersen. Bottom row, left to right: Ralph Sullivan (manager), Perry Jensen, Jim Archer, George Solari, Donald Zunini, Bob McDonald, Jim McVey, Harry Paille and Norman Whiddett (manager). Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Reno Library.

he was a bad type of guy. I think the only fistfight he ever lost was to my brother in an alley behind the dance hall, and I saw that. He was in prison two or three times for doing bad things, but he was an awfully good athlete, and a guy I really liked to be around. He was just a tough guy.

I was student body president of Reno High, and I was also the president at B. D. Billingshurst. I needed to make a speech at BDB, and my dad told me something that was a funny joke. It was really funny, and I brought down the house. It wasn't my idea; it was his. I ran against Frank Petersen at Billingshurst, and we got to Reno High School, and I ran against Frank Petersen again and beat him again. But we were good friends, and we still are. He lived on Moran Street, and we even went to the University of Santa Clara together. He was better than I was there, and we went right out of high school. Frank got accepted

to Santa Clara on a football scholarship, and I got accepted, but didn't have a scholarship. I was a lineman, but he was a running back, and at that time running backs were the most needed.

I played pool at the Block N in Reno. I was exceptionally good, and then, because of that, I made quite a bit of money, and sometimes got in trouble because of it, but I'd go there a lot. I'd either skip school and get in trouble for that or play after school and on weekends. There was a kid named Freddy Bourie, and I don't know what nationality he was, but he was about a year older than me, and he was the one that everybody tried to beat. I would say that he was the number one player that we knew around Reno here, and I was up in the second or third class. We'd play for money, and lots of times, during a pool game if I got a break, I could win as much as the guy I was playing with, even if he was better, because I'd get the shots.

We had a full-sized pool table in our basement that was given to my mother when her hairdresser took over an apartment that had this regulation size table, a Brunswick. She was the same lady that gave us King. She offered it to my mother, and my mom wanted to take it, so she asked my dad. My dad was half raised on pool tables so he accepted it. He said, "Sure, we'll put it in the basement." So, he put it together himself in the basement...and then it started! It was the most used piece of equipment that I have ever known. We played pool day and night until my mother would kick us out and tell us to get out of the basement. I can still hear it.

That's how I got to be quite a good pool table fanatic for a while there. My dad never did say, "Don't play for money." Never thought of it, probably. We played for lots of money down there. There was this time when my mother came

down to the basement, and we had a young kid who was the son of a lady that was in Nevada to get a divorce. She stayed six weeks, and she brought her son with her from the East Coast. They lived catty-corner across the street in an apartment house from us next to the Piggly-Wiggly store, and he'd come over every day in the summertime, and we'd play pool into the evening, and I pretty much owned him—until my mother caught us. He'd always lose, because he wasn't very good. Then she told my dad. My dad told me we were going to take a walk. He took me by the arm and walked me across the street over to that lady's apartment and hit the doorbell. [laughter] The boy's mother came to the door and my dad said, "Bob's got some money he wants to give you." He made me give back every dime. It was quite a bit of money for a guy then. It was something like \$180.00. I was



Jim Archer and Bob McDonald at football practice, ca. 1937. Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Reno Library.

probably about 14 or 15. Well, I don't know if it was my first hustle, but it was my most successful one.

When I was probably about 12, I was out at Moana Hot Springs. My mom sometimes would take us out or we'd hitchhike out or even walk out to the swimming pool. We'd swim there a lot, and I was always a good swimmer. They had a spa pool adjacent to the swimming pool with a door in-between, and one time that door was open. We went in, and nobody else was there. Three of us were swimming in there, and these older guys came in and told us we had to leave. I didn't know who they were, but as we were leaving, they got behind us and kind of beat us up with their fists.

Many years later, I was playing pool in the Block N, and one of the guys that beat me up years ago came walking through from the other end from Douglas Alley with two other guys. I took my pool cue off and looked down, and I

followed him out in the alley. I said, "Remember me?" Then I started pounding on him. I hurt him pretty good—I knocked him down and knocked his head against a truck that was out there and did a little damage to it. This made us even for him beating me up when I was a little kid, and when he was down there I kept saying, "Why don't you get up?" and he couldn't get up—he wouldn't get up. I don't know if he couldn't or wouldn't, but that was an episode that I've always remembered and enjoyed a lot. I said to myself, "I took care of him!" when I'd see him on the streets later.

The Block N had a bar, but they didn't sell to anyone unless they were of age. We'd walk past the bar where we could buy sandwiches, if we wanted, then, we would go to the back where they had a big room with pool tables, and downstairs they had billiard tables. Billiard tables are tables that don't have any holes, but instead bounce one ball off the other. It was a very happy place all the time. Back then it was on Douglas Alley.

While playing pool, I'd win more than anybody ever won for my age and during those years. There's a pool game called Pea Pool or Kelly Pool. The wooden peas with numbers on them were about the size of a marble and came in a leather pouch. There were all kinds of games that we could play with them. A player was chosen to shake the pouch and throw a pea out of the pouch for each player. For example, if I'm the guy chosen, I'd get Joe one, Smitty would get one, and then I'd give myself one. There would be twelve left in the pouch if just three of us were playing. In order to win the game, the player had to get the ball in a pocket that matched the number he got on the pea. Well, I'd steal about three more out of that pouch than they had, so I had about four chances to win—the one I got legally and the ones I stole. Then I would put them back in the pouch at the end of that game so nobody ever knew they weren't in there. I'd just take them out of my pocket, and I would



Frank Petersen at Bob's house.

sneak them right back in. I made dozens of dollars on those. Were we cheaters? [laughter] Hell, yes.

My grades were pretty good at Reno High, but don't ask me how I passed all my classes. I wasn't very good in the foreign language, Spanish, and during one class the teacher gave us an exam. I couldn't do it, and I wanted to get out of there. I knew I wasn't prepared for the thing, and I couldn't go out the door, so I held on to the ledge and jumped out the window, not a big jump, but I landed on the vice principal's back. He was out walking around out there, looking for smokers because he didn't like that. So of course I got in trouble, and down we go to the principal's office. His name was E. Otis Vaughn.

I was expelled, so I went down to the pool hall, and somehow my dad found out about it. He was in his office, which is about a block and a half away, and he came over there where I was down in the basement level playing. He said, "Come on with me," so I put my cue down, headed out, and he brought me back up to Reno High. We went to the principal's office, and he went in a little different than most people—he knocked on the door and opened it at the same time! He didn't wait for anybody to open it to let him in. He said, "Otis, I want you to tell me what happened to Bob, here." He told the whole story. Then my dad said, "I want to tell you something, Otis. He's going to get an education, and you're going to allow him to get an education. When he does something wrong, all you do is call me, and I'll take care of him. He's back in school right now. You can't kick him out of public school, and he's going to stay in it as long as he's around here, and you're not allowed to tell him he can't come to school." [laughter] "But he's got to do what you tell him when he gets here. You understand that?"

And he said, "Yes, Joe, I understand that."

He said, "Well, he'll do it, and if he doesn't, you just tell me."

He said, "OK. Bob, you be at school tomorrow morning at eight o'clock."

I said, "Thank you, Mr. Vaughn," and that ended it. So, I was back in school, but I didn't do any bad things anymore, either! I never did get in any trouble again with the school. [laughter]

For the final exam in Spanish, I sat in the back of the room, and Felix Turrillas [Jr.] was on the grass below. The teacher gave us the final exam—fill the answers out on two pieces of paper—I put a string around them—this was dumb—and dropped it out the window. Felix was down there in the grass, and he filled them all out in twenty minutes. I got number one in the class, got an A. Some guys knew it, but no teacher ever found out about it. Felix and I were good friends, and he did a lot for me. He was a very brilliant student, and it seemed like with all the difficult courses we studied, Felix had less problems with them. Felix was Spanish Basque and they spoke Spanish at home.

Felix had three sisters, Connie, Clara and Margaret, and they were all A students when they were growing up, too. Their dad was a gambler, and they lived just a block up from me at California and Virginia Street [the Lake Mansion]. I know I was with Felix every damn day of his life back then! They were a wonderful family, and it was great to go visit Felix because his mother was a wonderful lady, and she always had something new for you to eat and made sure you ate it. She didn't speak very good English, but you understood her.

His dad's gambling house, the Northern Club, was right next to where Harrah's Club is now on Center Street. Felix Sr. operated it, and it probably had about five twenty-one tables, some slot machines with probably two crap tables. That's kind of a guess, but I think that'd be about the size it was.

Felix Jr. was a gambler from birth and when we were at Reno High, and Felix didn't play any sports—except pool. He wasn't very good at that,



From left to right: Bill Curtis, Lee Bronson (kneeling), Bob McDonald, Felix Turrillas Jr., Bob Cushing, Tubby Schroeder, and Margie (last name unknown), ca. 1937.

but he was good with cards. During the war, he was in the navy, and he shipped to Hawaii, then over to Guam, and he was playing and gambling all the time with the other soldiers that he was with, and he won it all. Those guys didn't have a chance. [laughter] When the war was over, and I was coming home, a bartender in Hawaii there asked me if I knew somebody named Turrillas, he told me that he had just left, and was on his way to Reno. He was out, but I never did see him during the war.

He eventually ran a place in Lovelock called Felix's. I was gambling there one night, playing twenty-one, and somebody else was dealing. Felix came by and said to me, "Get the hell out of there. I need the money." So I went up to the bar or something, and I watched as he went around the table, and he became the dealer. Boy, did that

money come back to him in a hurry, and he got it all back. He was good. He was really good. [laughter]

We had a lot of hobos going through town all the time. They'd been walking, hitchhiking, or riding the rails to get to the West Coast. Most all of them were just hungry, and my mother would always help them because they'd walk by my house and see the door open, or knock on the door, and ask my mother if she had something for them to do. She'd give them a job, like mow the lawn if the grass was tall or dig some weeds, and even if she had to, make some job up, so that at least she could make them some sandwiches. They always really needed food so she'd feed them, but she'd make them do something. They were all first-class people that were out of work and couldn't get a job but wanted to go to the West Coast to maybe

find something. The people in Reno treated them very first-class. She probably gave them a little money once in a while, even though we didn't have any extra money, anyway. We just had enough.

My dad was very generous with helping other people, too. He'd have people from Tonopah, Goldfield and Rawhide that would come to town, and they'd visit him. There were lots of those "kids" that he'd known from growing up and working out in the mining towns, and some of the guys were looking for work. These folks that were broke and needed something to eat would come into the newspaper building, and since he had a good job at the newspaper, he'd help everyone he could. The way my dad helped out is that he would send them over to a restaurant on Second and Center Street, The Grand Café. He would write them a note that they'd give to the restaurant, and the cook could make them a sandwich, and the Café would charge them nothing. That just tickled everybody, and my dad would pay for it at the end of the month. Whoever came into him that wanted some money didn't get any, because they'd just get a note for the Little Waldorf or The Grand Café.

Some of the hobos that were from Southern California would come here looking for work, and if that didn't pan out, then would try to get into the San Francisco area. There were people going through town all the time. Sparks was the real railway town, but the tracks ran right through the center of Reno from the east, and the hobos would hop the train to the west. People also riding in from the west would take a stop here. The trains were easy to ride, and if someone didn't have the money, they could always jump on one. But we'd get those fellows coming by, all kinds of hobos that had just gotten off a freight train, and they were trying to get a job someplace, didn't know where to go, and hadn't eaten. We'd get people who'd come by and try to sell us something at our house once in a while, but it wasn't a consistent thing.

As kids, we got around town all different ways. We rode a bicycle, we had a car, and we hitch-hiked, and since the train went right through the middle of town at the north end of Reno, a lot of us rode it from Sparks. We'd grab it and hold on till it got into Reno and then jump off. Once I even hopped a train, and I wish I hadn't. I wanted to go to San Francisco. As a matter of fact, a fellow named Wayne Gooden, who lived a block south of us on Virginia Street at a corner, and I—against everybody's advice and us trying to show, I guess, how smart we were—Wayne and I got on that freight train.

We went down into Sparks because we had a lot of friends that had cars so somebody got us down there—we got on top of a boxcar, and we're going west. The railroad ran right to Oakland, and there were quite a few trains that carried passengers coming from Fallon or as east as Chicago, but a lot of them just carried freight, and we got on one that was carrying hay and *everything*. We were afraid to get down in the boxcar because if we pulled the hatch down, it would lock, and we'd never get out until they unloaded maybe in Timbuktu. So we're on the east end of the top hatch and finally decided to climb in because we figured out how to keep it open so we wouldn't get locked in. Anyway, it was colder than hell, and we damn near froze. We stood there, mostly, because we had a couple of sticks to prop the hatch up but had to hold them there to keep them from falling in. We went through Reno, the two of us, and it snowed. We couldn't keep warm because it was very cold, and we weren't dressed for that, but we stayed on. He'd hold the sticks for a while, and then I'd hold them for a while. Then we were going over the summit, and we got on the other side, but we still weren't anywhere near San Francisco. We stopped at a little town before the train got to Sacramento. It might have been Colfax, but it wasn't even Auburn yet. Anyway, the fellow working on the train came and pulled the door wide open, and he said, "You

kids better get out. I've known you were there all the time." We dove off that train. I thought we were getting arrested. We were both pretty near frozen, but were off the tracks when that fellow came back to meet us. He put his arm on us and said, "You guys come with me. I'll take you home and give you something to drink." He was talking about coffee or tea or something hot. "Well, come on. We'll give you guys something to eat. You should never get on a goddamned freight train in this kind of weather. It's terrible!" [laughter] So we went into his house, and his wife fixed us some lunch. Afterward, he brought us outside and said, "Go out here and stand on the corner right there, hold your thumb up, and you can hitchhike, and somebody will take you into San Francisco. Now start hitchhiking, and if you're going to San Francisco, get on the highway and stay away from the trains." We promised that we'd just hitch-hike. We caught a ride finally, and after two or three more different rides, we got to the Fielding Hotel in downtown San Francisco. We opened the door, and I was a big shot, "Where do I sign?" and the guy at the desk said, "I got some money here for you."

I said, "What's that?" It was about twenty bucks for both of us.

"That's for you and your friend to buy some tickets for the bus"—that's about what they were then, total—"to Reno and go home! This is from your father." [laughter]

I don't know how knew, and I never did find out. The Fielding was managed by Joe Snelson, a guy that was born and raised in Elko and was a classmate of my dad's at the University of Nevada.

We wanted to go to San Francisco, and my dad said, "No," so we went, anyway. It was really funny when the guy at the desk knew us when we came in and said, "Your dad told me if you came in here . . ." [laughter] My dad figured out exactly what we were doing when we didn't come home. We got a ride back on a bus, but he took care of all that.

We went just to show off for somebody who said we couldn't do it, so we jumped on that train, and away we went with wind blowing on my face the whole way. It was kind of interesting till we got to Lawton's Hot Springs, but once it started uphill, it was cold. Oh! It was winter, but we made it back and didn't do it anymore.

I've always had trouble on those trains, anyway. It wasn't nice. One Christmas I was with my wife and kids. We were on our way to Aspen, Colorado for a ski trip. Anyway, I was sitting at the back end, and it's time to go to bed. I'd had fun in the evening in the club car and on my way back missed the place where I was supposed to sleep—missed our berth and climbed in with another lady. I missed... yes. [laughter] I remember that because I was in the wrong place. [laughter] The woman was in the breakfast car the next morning when I went in to have coffee. She said to the lady with her something like, "That's him, right there!" [laughter]

Prostitution was not illegal in Reno, and the cribs were down by the police station. They were only a block from the police station, and the policeman was in there all the time until eleven o'clock at night when his shift was off, and they didn't want another one in until the next morning, probably around ten, eleven o'clock the next day. We could go in because they'd allow us boys in there, and they never did bother the younger people unless there was a fight or some drinking. We could walk in or drive down and park, and to get there, we'd come downhill off of the Second Street bridge by the police station. They had a little dance hall, and there was a restaurant, but I never went in the restaurant. There were separate little houses all the way around in a circle so we'd go visit one of the girls, and inside their rooms there was a window across on the other end from the door. She'd stick her head out the window, and we'd talk to her. If someone wanted to go in there, we could just walk around, she'd open the door, and we'd go in and make a deal with her.

She'd sit right at the window, and across from there, somebody else is sitting at her own window, and I would just talk to them. It depended on who you were, and how much a guy could talk, but it usually cost a buck and a half, maybe two bucks. There were policemen down there, normally, and they'd drive to the bottom and wander around so there were never any fights that amounted to anything.

There was a fire, and my father came down to cover it as a reporter. It was in the afternoon, and I was supposed to be at school. [laughter] We were there, and he asked me, "What the hell are you doing down here?"

I don't know how I answered, but I probably said, "We're just looking around," or something. He made sure to tell my mother, so my father was ordered to tell me, explain those things to me.

My brother and I slept in the same room with twin beds upstairs, and my father came into the room, and said, "Are you awake?"

I said, "Yes, I'm awake."

He said, "If you don't quit hanging around where you were today, and where I saw you, you're going to get something you don't want," turned around and left, and that is the only sex speech I ever had that I can remember. Well, some of those girls married college kids in Reno, and they're living happily ever after. Very interesting the way it was.

Margaret Fuller was an English teacher at Reno High School and was reasonably young compared to the other teachers. She was very nice and strict to everybody, but she was extremely popular with the students. She required that we turn in our homework on time, and she was tough that way, but was fair. Later on, however, Jim Archer and I were both were doing badly in that English course of Mr. Ross's. So we had a friend, Joe Moore, who was a night janitor working in the building, and he left Mr. Ross's door open purposely one time. When it got dark, Arch and

I got to the class, went through his books and finally found the one with the grades in it and were changing those grades when we looked up, and Mr. Ross said, "Can I help you fellows?"

And we said, "Well, I guess not."

So he gave us a lecture and told us if we would—and he did use a phrase I recall—"dummy up," we could keep this one quiet, but don't ever do it again.

And we said, "OK."

Joe Moore was one year ahead of us, but he was a full-time employee of the school, and of course, he was a close friend of ours. That was a secret that Arch and I kept for many years. And Joe Moore. And Mr. Ross. My grade ended up being a B, and that was a good grade at Reno High. I got a lot of B's the same way I managed getting a B out of Spanish when I dropped the test out of the window to Felix.

We absolutely had to be in school and on time because they required that as well as going to class every day that we were supposed to, and if we weren't in school, we'd better get a written excuse from our parents, or whoever was our guardian. Sometimes we'd sneak out after we got there, but we were in the class when school opened, and then we'd either go out the side door or window. Evidently, they didn't take attendance in every class, but overall, we were generally pretty good about going to school.

There were three movie theaters in town, the Majestic Theater, the Granada, and the Wigwam. If a guy smoked, he went up to the far back end of the second story of the theater with his girlfriend, his arm around her while lighting a cigarette, and all the time hoping that he didn't get caught because they wouldn't allow kids to smoke.

A lot of us would hang out over at Betty Jean Henderson's house—Al Conton, myself, and Arch—there were a number of us. One night we arrived at about seven, and at about eight, Al Conton allowed Betty Jean to sit on his lap. Her

aunt started visiting with us about things. Al had his hand where maybe it shouldn't have been, but he sat there for at least two hours without moving it. So his hand went to sleep, and finally, he got up because her aunt went to get a drink of water, so everybody else could get up and out to his car with him to go home. [laughter]

People hung out at that house because the Hendersons were very generous, and Betty Jean, of course, loved it. Her dad was always fishing on weekends, and many a time I was over there when he was either coming down to go fishing,

or he'd been fishing, but he always had something to do with fishing. So he didn't spend much of his time at home, which gave people a lot of time to hang out over there because Mrs. Henderson didn't bother anybody, and it was kind of a good place just to sit around and talk or play cards or whatever else we wanted to do. Gloria lived with Betty Jean, and they shared a room. I knew where the window was.

We knew where the window was at the Dayton family, too, and we knew how to open it from the outside. Mr. Dayton, who worked at the power company, finally figured that one out, and one night as we were crawling into the basement, we broke the window because he had it set so it'd have to break. Then he arrived downstairs with us, and that was the last time we ever went in that window. [laughter] His daughter's name was Elizabeth Dayton. I can't recall who her boyfriend was, but she had a lot of them because she'd date a lot of people. When she graduated from high school, she went to Cal. She was a nice girl, and her parents were tough to get around. [laughter] I think they were all the same, the mothers and fathers. Some mothers were tougher than others, and the guys all seemed to be able to figure that out in a hurry and work around that in various ways like getting them called out. Mr. Dayton was hard to get around that, and the only thing you could do with him is to take his daughter to the movie or to a dance or some other activity.

There were lots of dances going on every Friday night, usually at the same place, Tony's El Patio Ballroom, and it was up by the railroad tracks [Chestnut Street—now Arlington Avenue—and Commercial Row]. It was a big dancehall, and all the young people went there, and it was one of those dancehalls where you'd tap somebody on the shoulder, they'd stop, and you'd get to dance with them. The fights were all outside because the Reno High guys would be around the girls and wind up in fights and so forth. Maybe I might



Betty Jean Henderson on Hot Sox Day, ca. 1937.

have had one or two fights. [laughter] We were probably drinking, and it was mostly beer, but it wasn't hard to get and there wasn't a lot of it. At the dances there might be some, and maybe we'd have a little.

The girls were all different, and I knew most all of them well. I knew the parents, and if they liked me, I could go to their house any night and walk up to the front door and hit the bell, and they'd open the door and either bring me in or the girlfriend would go out with me, and then I'd bring them home, and that time with most of them was around eleven o'clock. Most of the girls were at that dancehall on weekends, and sometimes I'd meet them there because a lot of the girls would go together there.

My brother, Joe, was kind of the fighter up there, and nobody could mess with him. The fights were all behind the building. There was a fellow named Randy Booth that used to fight him once in awhile. As I mentioned before, Randy later went to prison even though he was a wonderful person, but just some things he'd do wrong, and most of what he did was stealing things and riding on railroads.

Besides Gloria, I dated Peaches Fisher lots of times. She lived right by St. Mary's Hospital, and she was a real pretty girl. She was a couple of years younger than I was, but her parents allowed her to go out till midnight sometimes, and we'd have wonderful times. She was a good girl.

One time, after my kids were grown up and I had been married to Gloria for forever, I went to visit Peaches when she was sick, and she died after that. I went back east, and Al Ferrari was with me. So one night I either borrowed a car or got a cab and rode down to where she lived. She was in the kitchen with her daughter, and she kind of was telling me about her personal life, and how her husband used to beat her up—things of that nature. I just sat down in the kitchen with her and talked for awhile and then went back with



Peaches Fisher

the rest of the fellows. She was still very pretty. Her dad had worked for the railroad, and she had a brother, Pete, who also worked for the railroad before he got a little older, and the last I heard, he lived in Oakland. I dated Peaches at the same time that I dated Gloria, or before and after, and all of that [laughter].

Gloria was pretty much my steady girlfriend. We kind of fought, sometimes. Well, I think anybody that age does argue a little bit. That's part of the game. She lived with the Hendersons during high school, but she lived with her grandmother over on Nixon Street during junior high school so she wasn't too far from B.D. Billingshurst. Her grandmother was kind of tough and mean, but reasonably fair because if she said she wanted Gloria home at ten o'clock, she didn't mean 10:05! She meant ten o'clock. She was that type of a person, but she was good.

My parents showed up at my high school graduation, and we all went to the Twentieth

Century Club in downtown Reno where they had a celebration, and that's where the ladies used to play bridge.

At Reno High School there were three high school fraternities, and I was a Delt. They were quite active at the time, and Charles Mapes was a member of the Delts. He and his mother lived up north of the high school in a big home, and she was very active in the fraternity. She would let us eat there numerous times and would make cakes and cookies for us. They lived in that house while I was in high school with Charles, and they'd take people in, and when Arch came in from the ranch to go to school, he stayed with them. Mrs. Mapes was a very nice lady.

Then Charles went to the University of Nevada, and he was a very active sort of guy there. He was active as an SAE and a fairly decent friend

of my brother's. I was also an SAE when I got back from the war, and I would see Charles at the meetings. We had a get together one time out at Washoe Lake, and for some reason—because of his showing off a little—they picked him up and threw him in the lake with his clothes on—fully dressed, shoes, and the whole works. I thought he was going to drown because he was always getting himself in trouble that way. He was a needler—a word people use—and some people didn't take it well, but he was a fairly decent guy. He ran that hotel, and he did a very good job and was very successful with the gaming. He knew what he was doing and had a lot of good employees there. Together with the restaurant downstairs, and another restaurant in the hotel, he did well.

Where Sky Tavern is now is where we did all our skiing when we were growing up. Well, you might put me down as a fair skier. [laughter] I had to do a lot of turns just to keep my speed down, because it was kind of steep, and that was during my early years of high school, but I don't think I did much skiing after that. I hit a lady one time, the wife of a friend of my family, one of the judges here in Reno, and as I hit her, I put my arm out and I carried her about three hundred yards straight down the hill before we stopped. [laughter] We were very lucky that neither one of us got hurt because there was always somebody getting hurt and if that happened, they would just go down to that restaurant and maybe just require a Band-Aid, and some of their friends would help them, or they'd take them to town.

I could go up there and start skiing, and soon I'd be skiing with a friend because most of us were just some of the local kids from around my neighborhood. We would just meet up there, it wasn't too formal, but that's how it all took place, and it continued to grow and grow and grow, and now Nevada has some of the major ski areas in the United States, and it all began with what we called Slide Mountain when they built that first



Bob preparing for his graduation from Reno High School in 1938.



Bob skiing, ca. 1936.

chair lift that went clear across the mountain from Sky Tavern. We never even knew that was possible, and it was very well done. Everything was top-line skiing, I would say.

When I was first skiing all that was there was a little restaurant on the way up to Mount Rose, and when we'd come to that, we would usually park about a block above that, and we had to do a lot of walking. We'd eat at the little restaurant, but when we had the girls with us, we'd always have a picnic. We'd take the girls up, and they'd sit on the side of the road up there. We just wore our jeans, a pair of gloves, and whatever else we happened to be wearing. I had ski boots, and that was the main thing, and it just depended on the weather as to what I wore, and if it was going to be cold up there, I'd wear something that would be effective, and if it wasn't, I'd wear something light. We had to buy our own skis and ski equipment. We'd climb up the hill and ski down to where we had parked.

When we started there was no ski patrol. It wasn't operated formally, nobody owned it, and I don't know if anybody ran it, or it was just people going up there and skiing, but it was very good skiing. There were volunteer skiers that would help out everybody, and then they had some that they paid, eventually. There were lots of folks skiing up there in those days, and after we had been doing this for several years, there was a rope tow from the highway to the top of that hill going west, and we'd ski off of there a lot. We did have to pay, but it wasn't very costly—maybe a buck, or a buck and four bits.

I was an instructor up there one time for one season, which wasn't very much of a job. It was just watching whomever I was showing how to ski as they came down the hill, and then I'd tell them what they should have done instead of what they did do. It was very simple.

Warren Hart was one of the young ski instructors up there on the slopes, one of the good skiers, too. He was raised by his grandmother and his father, but his father didn't seem to hang around much. Of course, we were too young to understand all that stuff. I knew him all my life. I was ahead of him a year at Reno High. He went to a military school for awhile just like my brother.

After the war, there were the three of them that became great friends and skiers—Warren Hart, Jerry Wetzel and Hal Coddington. Jerry Wetzel was an excellent skier, and later on in his life he and his partner, Hal Coddington, had a place out south of Reno where they sold ski equipment. The store was called Coddington and Wetzel's.

We'd get lots of snow in the winter. Most of the time, we got that type of snow that would stick together when you'd grab a handful. There was a lot of snowball throwing—sometimes a little too much up at Reno High School. Otis Vaughn, who was the principal, stopped that pretty well. Another thing we had to do at Reno High was take ROTC, and we did a lot of things

during the winter because of ROTC—like skiing. But we also skied for P.E. so, say, rather than basketball, we were skiing. For example, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday was the time we had to use the skis. If we were out skiing, our skis were gone, and we were out in the flatlands or down a hill if I could find one. They didn't care where we went, and there wasn't the traffic there is now. But in any event, we'd go down in the basement and get our skis from the corners where everybody kept their skis. We had our name on them, and if they wanted to find someone because they thought he wasn't doing what he was supposed to do, they'd go down there and look for his name on the skis, and if they saw Bob McDonald's name written on the board, but my skis are still there, I'm not doing what I'm supposed to be because I'm supposed to be out skiing.

Arch and I would go down, get our skis, throw them on our shoulder, and go on out, so somebody would write our names down on the board for skiing. Well, we just went out and hid the skis, and went down to Chism Ice Cream and played around and got a lot of ice cream for nothing, or did something different because we didn't plan on skiing at all. Then we'd come back, and we pick up the skis where we put them, and take them back down to the basement, and go about our way. Well, they weren't there where we hid them one day, and we went to the head man and complained.

We said, "Somebody stole our skis."

He said, "I know it. It was me," and we got in all kinds of trouble, but eventually we worked it out. [laughter]

The ice-skating was always done at Idlewild Park and on the Truckee River if it froze. Sometimes they'd kick us off the river and tell us not to do it anymore, but very little. There weren't too many winters where the river froze enough to skate, but we'd always be able to at Idlewild Park. I don't recall anybody falling through the

ice, but we all took some terrible flops, so to say. Nobody was ever really hurt, but there were a lot of bruises those days.

For automobiles to drive around in the snow, folks would use chains for their back tires. I think there were snow tires at the time, but I never did have enough money to buy any of them.

There were numerous times where you had to sit and wait maybe an hour or two hours, sometimes, while they cleared Highway 40 so you could drive through to get home to Reno from Sacramento, but there were some roads that were just not open in the wintertime. One of them was at the turn-off in Truckee that goes to Lake Tahoe. Once in awhile that would be closed for part of the time, and you'd have to come clear back to Reno, and try another road or just stay put. The road from Minden to Lake Tahoe would be closed during the winter, and somehow some winters nothing was ever closed, because there wasn't that much snow. The weather is pretty much the same as it was in the 30s and 40s, but people my age say that there used to be a lot more snow.

Well, my childhood was, looking back, a very interesting one, a very fair one. Compared to other kids, my life was just the same as everybody else's. We didn't have more money than most people, but I was more active than most of them, more of a hustler than most of them, did bad things more than most of them. I was a lot different than most of them in all regards like hitch-hiking someplace, riding the rails, bumming rides, and stealing tires. Jesus, I stole a tire off a car in a parking lot one time—it was me and Al Conton—and a policeman was out there sitting in his police car. We didn't know he was there. We had this car jacked up, just getting the tire off, the back tire. Something happened, and the policeman left because he must have gotten a call or something. We took that tire and got the hell out of there. Well, we needed it. We had a car that needed one. We did a lot of things like that.

I was treated well by my parents. I worked a lot. I had my own paper routes, I sold papers, I mowed lawns and did everything available I could to get some money that I could spend for something, probably that I shouldn't have, because I couldn't get it from my parents. It was a good life. I was a kid that maybe caused a few fights, but I was well liked, had a lot of friends, had a lot of people that followed me and would do what I suggested.

I worked for the state highway department one summer, and that was a nice job—that was the best job I ever had in my life! I was co-pilot in the pick-up truck as we drove on Highway 40 starting from Fourth Street at South Virginia all the way up to the stateline on the west end of Verdi. I'd show up down there in their office down in Sparks where they had an open couple of acres and kept some cars and trucks, and they'd normally put me in the back end of a pick-up truck, or sometimes if I had my own car, I could take that. Most of our time was between Reno and Verdi. We'd get on the highway right there up by Lawton Hot Springs on towards Verdi, and pull the truck off of the side of the highway quite a ways, and play cards, then we'd eat lunch, and that'd take a couple of hours so by the time I got back to town, it was time to quit for the day because we would eat at noon and come back about three thirty. [laughter] The theory was that we were clearing the roads, but very seldom was there much mud from the snow melt, and we would just use a shovel to clear it.

Sometimes we had to do a little bit of work, but very little, and when we did work we were taking rocks off the highway and off the sides of the highway, plus anything that was growing, or if there was a wreck, we'd help with that, but there never was—maybe one or two. It was a very good job, but I did not get paid very well. I got paid seventy-five cents to a dollar an hour, and it was mostly a dollar an hour. I also worked on the Mt. Rose Highway once in awhile, and now that was when I

really had to work because that snow wasn't taken off in the winter, so in the summer there was a lot of shoveling of mud and leftover snow!

My other summer job was at this dairy—different outfit than Chism's—Murray was their name, and it was our friend, Ralph, and his dad, Sam, that owned a dairy right on the south side of Idlewild Park across from where the baseball park and swimming pool are now. John Uhalde and I worked there for about three months because something happened. They were kind of strange people, but they were nice. I wouldn't describe them as 'A' students, and then on top of that, this particular summer one of them got sick and couldn't work. The mother lived there, but she never came out of the house that I can remember, but I'd see her in the house.

They'd called on Uhalde and me, and we'd go over there, do what we were supposed to do to run the dairy, and whatever else they needed. There was a brick building right next to the house where they made ice cream and fooled around with milk, and the truck would come along, pick it up and deliver it to various stores. We'd do everything, and it was freezing. We'd take the milk out, put it in buckets and from there, put it into the bottles that they had delivered. We didn't stay long, and we weren't very good at it, but we kept it open. [laughter]

Uhalde was from Ely, and he went to the University here, but it was probably through my brother that I met him. He was a big Catholic, and a good man—a tough guy, but not a fighting tough guy, but a working and digging holes kind—mining and things of that nature. He was just first-class, and his wife, Harriet, still lives not too far from us.

I guess my parents could afford to send me to the University of Santa Clara. [The University adopted Santa Clara University as its official name in 1985.] It was not that bad, and then there was what work I did myself. I had a job in San Jose—I worked for Brooks Brothers—I made a little



Long time pals John Uhalde, Senator Alan Bible and Joe McDonald, ca. 1978.

money down there. I also had slot machines, and they helped quite a bit because that's where I made a lot of money, and I had two of them. I think one was a dime, and one was a nickel. I'd change them out in San Jose or Santa Clara.

Felix had the slot machines, and he loaned them to me or gave them to me because we were very close friends. We drove over the summit with them and threw our coats on top of them to hide them, and we hoped we wouldn't get caught because we didn't know if we could drive them across the state line. The priests didn't see them when we pulled into the University, and one looked the car over saying, "Anybody hurt in that wreck?" [laughter] That was a pretty lousy car. We unloaded them and got them into my room. The Jesuits couldn't go into my closet. That's the only place where I could keep my hidden things. I had the slot machines on a small sewing machine table that I could reel into the closet at night.

Frank Petersen was my roommate, and we got along great. He was down there on a football scholarship, and he played a lot. He didn't go into the pros but went into the service, and then he went to law school. We had to go to Mass on Wednesday and Sunday mornings if a guy was Catholic. Frank would lay there in bed, and I'd wake him up because I was leaving. I'd slam that door as hard as I could! [laughter] Archie and I would go to Mass.

The only time I prayed after that, I think, was when I was flying an airplane. [laughter] There was quite a bunch of Catholics overseas flying airplanes, too. Many of the guys down there at Santa Clara were going to this Catholic Church on Sundays, so I started going to church. There were a lot of kids from San Francisco, and they were all Catholic—at least, most of them were—and they became friends of mine. A lot of kids from San Francisco would come to Reno with



Gloria visiting Bob at University of Santa Clara in 1938.

me on vacations or something for a weekend. I think we had two or three of them that found girls up here. I'd come home on the holidays and we'd hitch-hike home if we didn't have a car that could get us home.

Santa Clara was an all-male University at the time. There was nothing to do! I mean, of course, going to Santa Clara in those days was like going to jail, you know. If there was a dance, they'd bring the girls over from Saint Mary's or from another school from around there. Other than that, they'd never let us go hardly anywhere, and if they did, we had to come home early lots of times, and we had to be in at nine o'clock, but if we had one of those brothers that was studying to be a Jesuit priest that would cheat a little—we had one during my sophomore year—where we'd throw a little rock up at the window, and he'd open the door, and turn his back. We'd get back in at maybe midnight when we were supposed to

be back at nine. Father George Lucy was one that was on our side, and he was a great man. He took good care of the kids, but he didn't see anything wrong in staying out for an extra couple of hours at night, either. We would go into San Jose where they had dances at San Jose State and other schools wherever there were college students.

We didn't have to wear uniforms there, but I suppose they required you to be reasonably clean, and I never ran into any problem with it. We had a lot of students from the Philippine Islands, and we had kids from California that were living about ten miles or more from the school, and they were day students, but there weren't too many of them. Some kids were from the Bay Area, and most of them lived on campus.

I had a car, an Oldsmobile, so I called my brother one day, and I said, "The car is running good. Come on over, and we'll go to Santa Cruz." Because I had all kinds of trouble with that car, and I wasn't any expert at it to keep batteries charged and everything, it was kind of a big deal to have that thing working, so Joe came over to Santa Clara. He probably hitch-hiked. We got in the car and we're going to Santa Cruz for the weekend. We got it right up to the top of the hill on Highway 17, and that son of a bitch quit. My brother said, "Move over," and he just pointed that thing down to the bottom of that canyon, and that was it, and we grabbed our suitcases. [laughter] It's still there, I guess. He pushed it clear over the top. Every bit of it—Joe pushed it right out of there, and it went down, bouncing around and, of course, destroyed it. Never did catch fire, and that was the last we ever saw of that thing. Just every time he'd been in it, something had gone wrong. "Now I got it perfect. Come on over," and he came over, and then nothing was right so there it went. Swear to God, it went over the . . . down. I can still see it. We hitch-hiked the rest of the way. We'd get good rides there, and we had somebody else with us. We chased girls and went to dances, or got a date. Along the



Father Callahan and Father Lucy at University of Santa Clara.

beach there, it was fun. I don't remember drinking hardly anything, maybe beer. I don't think we drank much whiskey or anything in those days. We got home from somebody who drove over there.

I think something that might be of interest is—it's hard for me to describe, but it was the life of my brother. He could've been a straight A student as far as school went, but he was quite rowdy and a fighter.

My mother was very strict with us out at her mother's house in Sparks, and we were always there for Thanksgiving dinner with everybody there. My brother would always do something wrong and get our granddad after him. He'd run into the house from the front door out to the living room with Grandpa right behind him, around back outside, and around there through the living room again, then around this way, and my granddad chasing my brother for doing something bad. He did a lot of bad things around

there on Thanksgiving. Oh, Jesus! Sometimes I hated it. He'd get in a fight with my granddad. He'd go out and pick his raspberries, and, boy, if you just touched those it was like stealing his cars. Joe would go out there and pull them all out just to make him mad, and he'd get mad. I can still see him running down with a raspberry bush right over his head all the way down. Joe was kind of a troublemaker, and in the family, it was always Granddad that he made mad. My mother would tell him to sit down, "Sit down, Joe. He's not hurting you." By that time Joe had spilled something in the kitchen.

One time my brother and my dad got into a fight, it was a fistfight, a terrible fight. I was in the living room. There was Joe, and my mother was crying. Finally we got them separated, but I don't know how. Joe went upstairs and went to bed. The next morning I saw his rear end jumping over the fence in the back yard, and he took off running and didn't come home until late that night. My mother was worried. My dad said, "He'll be back. Don't worry about it." I don't



Joe McDonald Jr.

know what the fight was about—something Joe said to him. They didn't like the bad language, I'll tell you, especially when you're using the good Lord's name. My dad was very serious about that, and she didn't swear—at least in front of me she never did swear, and he didn't swear.

Joe did help me with my homework if I ever asked him, and he'd help me with my math. That was my weak area, and mathematics was his top area so I did get enough help from him to pass a test so I could get credit for the class, but Joe gave up on me in Geometry because I didn't catch on as quick as he wanted me to so we got in a big argument, and I lost, and that was the end of that. I eventually got through the course.

I had such a tough brother that if anybody ever, I imagine, got real mad at me, he helped me. He did hurt a person one time that was trying to get in a fight with me when I was at a dance

hall in a building down on Sierra Street south of Reno. This guy called me downstairs, and he had his brother with him and wanted to fight, so I was ready, but I had been hurt in a football game that Saturday, and my brother knew that. There was a big circle of people out there, waiting for this, and the fighters, this fellow and me, are in the middle ready to go. All of a sudden, here comes a car with the top down, and it was kind of an old wrecked car, but it'd go good. It was my brother, and I didn't know he was coming—didn't even know where he was. He jumped out of the driver's seat of that car, hit this guy, knocked him out, hit that guy, and knocked him out, got in his car, and left. We went back upstairs to dance. Gloria was there. He was just a tough guy to be around. We'd get in a lot of fights at these dances. Everybody would—well, not everybody.

Joe was a little bit wilder than me because of things he did. I can remember one Sunday morning, why, when we got up, my dad said, "Well, I'll show you something," and took me over to the window, and there was Joe and his girlfriend sitting in the car in the front yard. They'd been sleeping there all night. She was from Gardnerville or Minden, and she brought him home, and they went to sleep right at the curb.

He was expelled from Annapolis twice. The first time for his grades and the second time for refusing to tell who he was with when he got in trouble. After that, he travelled around the United States for a long while, but he came back to Reno and finally graduated up here at the University of Nevada.

Joe enjoyed fighting, and he didn't always start them, but he always ended them. When Joe fought, he was fighting for himself. [laughter] When the SAE fraternity didn't furnish a boxer for a boxing tournament at the University of Nevada that the Block N Society sponsored for Stag Night, Joe said he'd fight a tough guy named John Polish from Yerington as a heavyweight. He



Bob, Joe Jr., and Leola McDonald on the Annapolis campus in 1936.

was representing the SAE house. My father was a member of SAE, and Joe was a very active member at that time.

Joe was awful tough, and he never lost a fight that I know of, but my brother had never been trained to box, so he started running out of the house where we lived on South Virginia all the way to Moana Hot Springs and back every morning. He did that for about two weeks.

I had come home from Santa Clara for a week before all this, and the day he told them that he would fight, he started running from our house out to Moana twice a day, every day, just on his own. Nobody even knew he was doing it, hardly. That was a three-mile run each way. But then I had to go back to school before it came time for the fight.

The fight was on a Wednesday night sometime in March during my second semester

in 1939, so I stayed by the phone waiting. There was a big crowd, and they got the tough guy, from Yerington, and he was quite a fighter, and then my brother got into the ring with him. They weren't big guys, probably around 185 a piece, but they were strong. That night my dad called me on the phone and told me, "You can go to sleep now. Joe knocked him out." [laughter] He said that Joe whipped him, knocked him flat out in the third round. My dad was awfully proud, and Joe was quite a hero in his eyes because he knew how hard he trained. He was just a natural fighter. My dad was, of course, sitting at the ringside, and it was a big thing because my dad was very interested in boxing, and that's why, obviously, now, that we boxed in our backyard all the time, and looking back, I see that my dad did like fighting, fair fighting.

Joe was just the type of person that pretty much accomplished whatever he started to do. That's about the best way to describe him, I think, and he would do it alone. He traveled all around the states by himself. Well, I don't know if I'd even enjoy doing that because I'd like to do it with somebody else—two of us at least.

My brother was also in prison camp during World War II. He was on Wake Island when the Japanese captured it. The only thing that bothered him, he said, was the bugs, and sometimes a rat would get at him at night, and he'd wake up and throw it off. He was very popular with the Japanese guards. He was not afraid of anything and there was nothing that bothered him mentally. He'd just go ahead and do it.

He was a civilian, but he was put in prison while working for Morrison Knudsen and United Press—he was a string correspondent for them. When the Japanese landed on Wake Island he was in the wrong place over there, and eventually they took him to Japan, then Shanghai.

I knew about Joe before I left to report for duty in the Aleutians. I was in Portland with the 54th pursuit squadron. My parents received an

official Naval communiqué that Joe had been killed in action. The bishop decided he'd have a funeral for him. Bishop Gorman called my dad and told him what he was going to do, and my dad said, "No, you're not going to do it."

Bishop Gorman said, "Joe, you run the newspaper; I'll run the Catholic church." So they had a funeral and that was at the end of December 1941. The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and Wake Island at the same time.

All I knew was that he was dead, but one day I was in a tent with another pilot, Bud Hustead, and we got mail very seldom, but he got a letter from his sister that said, "That was sure great what they heard about Bob's brother," which was encouraging, but I didn't know what "was great" meant. It meant that he had been mistaken for someone else that had been killed, who was also named Joe McDonald, but he was in prison camp—and stayed for three and a half years.

When he came back, he landed by ship in San Francisco, and my mother and dad wouldn't let me go down there and meet him. "You stay home." I was living with them. "We'll go get him. That way, he'll come back the same day he arrives." [laughter] I knew what they were talking about, so I stayed home. We went out the next day, and we wound up in Carson, among other places. When we got into Carson, we went into the Senator Bar and big old Ken Johnson was tending bar back there. Ken Johnson was a good friend of ours.

"McDonald," he says, "You son of a bitch, you owe me ten dollars for flowers." [laughter] Ken had gone to his funeral.

I used to ask him, "How tough was it?"

He said, "The worst thing for me," and I think my brother was probably as tough as anybody I ever knew, "was swallowing them damn flies at night while you're trying to sleep." He didn't like that! [laughter] Other than that, he didn't think it was too tough.

After the war, I was sitting with him when he lived in California—my folks were with us—and right then for some reason, he decided he was going to go to law school. This was on a Friday afternoon or something. I remember he picked up the phone and called back to Washington. He had no idea that he was going to do up until then, I don't think. A week later he took off and went to law school. He called Pat McCarran, my dad's pal, to get a job, and the Senator got him one, of course. He went to George Washington College of Law, but Gloria and I never went back to visit because we didn't have the money.

I graduated from Reno High School in 1938 where I played football and was an all-state guard. I was accepted to the University of Santa Clara and was hurt during spring football practice, so that ended my college football. During my junior year, through the University of Santa Clara, I received private flying lessons. My good friend, Father George Lucy, was the head of the selection committee, so I was chosen from a pool of volunteers who wanted to get lessons. We went north toward Sunnyvale to Moffett Field, and I took private lessons from a very well-trained pilot.

After I had accumulated ten hours, the next time I got down to the runway to take off, the instructor, who was sitting in the back seat of the single-engine airplane, said, "I want to get out." He got out of the plane clear on the end of the runway and then declared, "Now, you go straight and stay on the runway!" [laughter] "Go down there to the west fifteen or twenty miles till you come to a little town and then turn around and come back to the field and land." I did what he told me to do and didn't have any problems. Maybe he had me do three more short flights before I got a pilot's license.

When I got my license I went, practically, just across the street to the recruitment office and filled out some papers to join the Air Corps. I

passed a Class B physical. Class B meant that I had something that wasn't quite perfect. I was a little green/blue colorblind, but the rumor was that the Air Corps was going to take Class B's, so it didn't concern me at the time.

I went back to Father Lucy and said, "Father, I'm going to leave school. I'm going to go into the Air Corps."

He said, "Would you mind taking your slot machines with you when you leave?" [laughter] So I took my slot machines and drove home, and when I got there, I couldn't get any answer from the Air Corps. I didn't get called and didn't get called, so during this time I was working for the highway department. Louis Vince and I were surveying out on Highway 40.

My dad was a very close political and personal friend—I emphasize personal—with Senator McCarran, so one day he had me call Senator McCarran, and I asked him, "Is there anything I should be doing?" I was trying to get into the Navy Air Corps.

He said, "I'll call you back." Which he did—in about three days.

He said, "Go back down to Moffett Field and take another colorblind test." It was the Japanese colorblind test, that Ishihara test.

I practiced in Reno with one of the books that Ryan Poulsen, Russ Poulsen's brother had. He was an optometrist. On part of that test there were these circular lines and paths of little dots going in circles with all kinds of colors, and I was supposed to take my finger and follow the trail around until I wound up in the center of the circle. I couldn't do that, and that's how I flunked the first one, and then some of the numbers I couldn't quite read. The doctor would go through the book and stop at a page and would ask, "What's that number?" It would be a pattern that would show a number, and I couldn't read the ones that would be blue/green. But after practicing with that book, I got so I had the

numbers down pretty good. I even knew some of the pages.

I got in my car, went back down to Moffett Field, and I went in to see the doctor for another physical. When he got to the Ishihara test, he opened the book and asked me a number of questions as he flipped through the pages, and, finally, he got to one page and said, "You don't need to worry about that one," and just kept on going. I passed, came home, and was called about a week later to join the Army Air Corps. I've never known whether Pat McCarran passed me or the doctor passed me. That was some time in the early, early spring of 1941. My basic training was in Taft, California, near Bakersfield, and then I went down to Hemet Field for my primary training in southern California.

While I was in Taft we lost one pilot. We were on a flight over Lake Tahoe, and the pilot was flying the airplane that we called "Tail-End Charlie," which meant he was the last one of the rest of us. He wasn't with us when we got back and landed, so obviously he went into Lake Tahoe. We had been buzzing the lake, flying low over it. What happens to a plane if it gets a little wind is that a wing could drop, and if that wing catches on the surface of the lake water, the plane starts doing flips, and down it goes. Being last, nobody saw him do it. That was at least what was written up in the report, and everybody said that had to be what happened. He was flying a twin-engine trainer that everybody flew.

In our class there were four of us from Nevada, and the rest were from Texas. One was Joe Moore from Reno, another guy was Joe Kowsakowski, and he came from Pittsburgh, originally, but he was at the University of Nevada to play football. He didn't like to fly, but he didn't know that when he got there.

The class was divided—half of us would go to ground school, the other half would fly, and then we would switch. I was in ground school



Bob McDonald at Taft Air Base.

doing oral work and was sitting in a back seat of the classroom in the last row by the window so I could see the guys from the flight line walk by.

Here comes Joe Kowsakowski, “Bob! Bob! They washed me out! They washed me out!” He was happy. He didn’t want to be a pilot.

We had civilian instructors, and Joe and I had the same instructor, O’Grady, a great Irish guy.

I asked O’Grady, “What happened to my friend, Joe?”

He said, “Well, I took him up, and he got as far as the aerobatics. I said, ‘Mr. Kows,’—they called Joe Mr. Kows—“would you like to do a slow roll?” So he did. I said, ‘Would you like to do another one?’ He said, ‘No.’”

At the beginning of aerobatics, we cadets were seated in the back seat of these PT-13s, and the instructor was in the front. We couldn’t talk to O’Grady, but he could talk to us.

Joe didn’t want to fly, and they washed him out, so he went to bombardier school. During the war, he was coming back in a B-17 on a mission over in England when the pilot and co-pilot were killed, so Joe crash landed it and saved the rest of the crew. Flight school saved him even if he did flunk out.

On October 31, 1941 I graduated from the advanced flying school in Stockton, California. I came out as a second lieutenant, and just before graduation, I signed a contract to fly P-40s from New York to Africa. Four of us did, for a thousand dollars a month, but somebody knew that the war was going to start because about two weeks before we graduated, those contracts were immediately cancelled.

Then I was sent to Portland, Oregon to fly in a fighter squadron called the 54th Fighter Squadron. I flew P-43s, which is a small, big-engine fighter plane made by Republic. I was in Portland when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. I was single at the time, and Portland was a big stop for United Airlines in those days. The United stewardesses lived in a housing development not far from the air base, so the night before the war started, there were a bunch of us down there having a party, then afterward I went back to the air base. I was lying in bed with a hangover when the sirens went off, and I jumped out of bed just as everybody else did. We ran down to the flight line, and the first guys there got the first airplanes. I wasn’t the first one there, and all that was left was an AT-6—what I had been flying in flight school. [laughter]

I said to the squadron commander, “What do you want me to do?”

He said, “Get in that airplane and get the hell out of here. Go up the Columbia River and, before you run out of gas, bring it back and land it.” He just wanted to get me out of the way, that’s all.

After that was over, well, I called my girlfriend, Gloria. There’d probably been



Joe Moore and Bob at the Stockton Air Base.

numerous times that we had planned to get married, but we never could be in one place long enough, and when I realized that I was going overseas, I thought, “Well, now is the time. I better get married one of these days.”

Toward the end of January, 1942, I called my dad and mom and asked them to bring Gloria to Portland so we could get married. All of a sudden, my squadron was transferred out of there in the middle of the night as they were driving up to Portland for the wedding. [laughter] I was now at Paine Field in Everett, Washington. Well, they ran into the chaplain at the base in Portland, and while it was a big secret move, he knew. He told them where we had been transferred to and two or three days later, on January 29th, I got married.

We wanted to get married in the Catholic Church, but Gloria was not Catholic, although I was. We had a little difficulty with the church, but my dad talked with the Bishop up there, and he said, “Go ahead and get married.”

Gloria and I lived in a house in Everett, Washington until the 54th Squadron flew up to the Aleutians. After I left, she stayed longer and moved in with a girl named Frances Pope, who was married to Francis Pope—Fran and Frank Pope. Gloria and Fran lived together, and they stayed there when Frank and I were flying in Alaska.

A lot of us were second lieutenants, and we were taking flight lessons in a fighting airplane, an AT-6 with guns, and we’d strafe—hitting a target on the ground. We’d also have aerial fights. In February we got P-38s. We were the first ones to get them, and we had one instructor from the P-38 squadron in southern California that came up there and taught us how to fly and shoot these particular planes. This was a twin-engine airplane as compared to a single-engine airplane, so there was quite a bit of difference. I always felt safer in the P-38 than any plane I ever flew. Then we were selected to go fight the Japanese in aerial gunnery



Bob and Gloria were married in Everett, WA on January 29, 1942. Left to right: Joe McDonald Sr., Sam Palmer, Leola McDonald, Bob, and Gloria McDonald.

and strafing on the Aleutian chain. That's where we fought them, up and down the Aleutian Islands, and eventually our country took back the Aleutian Islands.

One time before I went overseas, Gloria and I were out at a party one night, when one of our pilots told us he was going to take that P-38 tomorrow morning and, "See how it'll fly."

I said, "You're crazy," and we laughed, and it was kind of a joke. "Why do you want to do that?"

"You know, I want to see how far it'll go up into the air."

Well, the next morning he did that, and he went as high as that P-38 would go. I don't know how high he was, but eventually he got to where the plane rolled over backwards with his landing gear upside down and came all the way until he

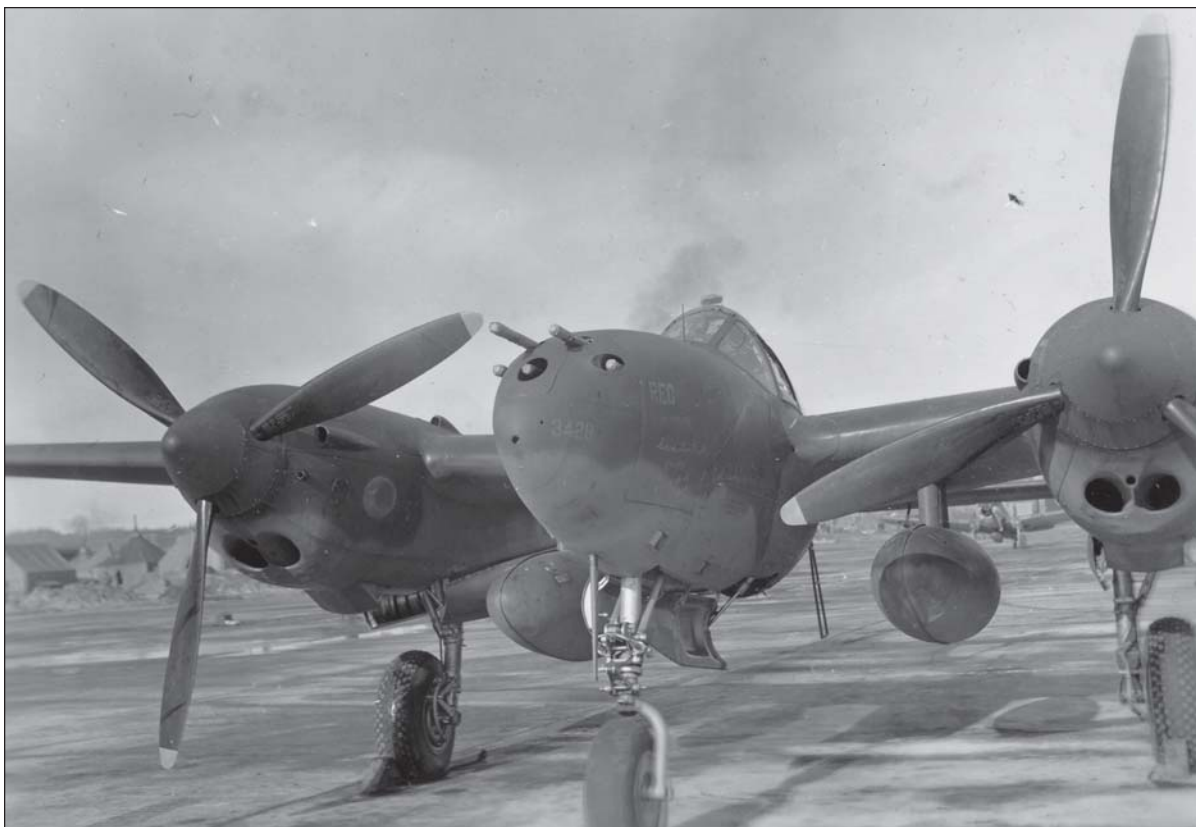
landed right in the river, but he was dead before he ever hit the water. Maybe he ran out of oxygen up there, but something happened.

We finally left for the Aleutians from Paine Field on May 20th, stopping first in Portland, then Hamilton Field in San Rafael, on to Mines Field in Glendale, and eventually taking the planes to the Lockheed factory in Burbank to have them modified and retrofitted for weather and battle in the Aleutians.

We flew back to Spokane on May 28th. Frank Pope, who was First Lieutenant at the time, was going to lead the first flight from Spokane, and we were to land at Edmonton, Canada, for fuel and then fly into Watson Lake. From there we were to go on into Anchorage, but we got weathered in at Spokane until June 1st.

Almost everybody in our squadron was newly married. We were all staying at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane, and every day we would go out to the line and get in our airplane. A DC-3 that was flying out ahead of us would call back and say the weather was bad, and back to the hotel everyone would go, with the one and only purpose: to get our wives pregnant before we left the country. [laughter] I don't know how many succeeded. I didn't, but after about four days of that, we finally got a break in the weather on June 1st, and we landed at Edmonton later in the day. What impressed me in Edmonton was the mechanics were all girls! Real nice girls. The next day we went on to Anchorage, staying there for about three days, and finally arrived at Cold Bay on June 5th. We left very early in the morning for Dutch Harbor on June 6th only to return to Cold Bay. We had arrived too late to be of any assistance. The Japanese had attacked Dutch Harbor a couple of days before.

We went on to Umnak later in the day, and there were only eight of us that made it on the first flight. On our way to Umnak, right down in the middle of the water was a big ship. I was the flight leader, and I decided that it was a Japanese



The P-38 before she left for the Aleutians.

ship. I called the other pilots on the radio and said, "We're going to strafe it." On our P-38s we had fifty calibers besides the fifty hot shots so we started strafing it. Nobody ever shot back at us. So everybody kept following me, and we got going around and around, and again, nobody shot at us, so we're really going down on it. We kept at it just like at ground gunnery school. It was just like gun practice. We strafed it until it started to tip and sink. "This is the last flight. I'm going to land." We were about ten to fifteen miles away, down over the water from Umnak.

I still say that it had a Japanese flag, and everybody that was with me said it did. I took an oath that there was one, but those that were in charge said that it was a Russian freighter, and we were in trouble, since Russia was our ally.

Just as we had come into Umnak and landed going to the north, some Japanese planes flew

over. We just turned around and took off downwind and started chasing those Japanese pilots around. With a few little flaps a P-38 has no problem taking off in either direction if the winds aren't too high. The P-40 pilots that were already stationed there had never heard or seen of an airplane that could land into the wind and then take off with the wind.

The weather was real misty. I was flying along, and I looked out my right side and there was an airplane flying in formation with me. It had a big red sun on it. It was a Japanese Zero. He went to the right, and I went to the left and we never did see each other again!

The P-38 was an airplane, in my opinion, that was designed for the Aleutian Islands. It was a low flying airplane that had two engines and armor plate on it, and it could take a lot of punishment. We'd have them come home with a



Bob in his fighter pilot gear.

lot of holes in them. We'd fly missions back and forth to Kiska Island that the Japanese had occupied, and that was a twelve hour round trip. We flew over the Bering Sea, and that plane flies excellent on one engine. It would always start in the wintertime. I had a Zero on me one time on a clear day. I was probably 10,000 feet up, and I saw him back there so I hit the deck, and he was gone. He couldn't catch me. Our planes were a lot faster, but weren't as maneuverable as the Japanese planes. We couldn't turn inside of a Japanese Zero. The P-38 didn't have that tight of a turn, but I don't know of any American built airplane that could do that. Those Japanese Navy Zeros could turn on a dime and could get right inside of you.

The living conditions on Umnak were awful. We were living in tents on a wooden platform with potbelly stoves in the middle. Those were

our quarters! It was hard to get fuel for the stove, and it wasn't a cold country, so bad as it was a wet one. We didn't get wet *all* the time, but we didn't fly a lot of the time because of low visibility.

The airplane strip was made out of metal mats called Marston Mats and was placed there by our infantry. Otherwise, our planes couldn't have landed there on the ground because it was muddy, and we'd sink in our airplane.

I slept most of the time and played cards at night. I slept and slept. There was nothing to do there, and the weather was so terrible that you didn't ever want to go outside. We played a lot of poker, and we didn't play for big numbers, but it was quite a bit. A guy could win himself between ten, twenty bucks a night, but nobody won every night.

We had a Sergeant who was the cook, and if it hadn't been for him I think everybody would have left. He could make SPAM taste like T-Bone



First Lieutenant Frank Pope



Bob and fellow pilots gathered before their departure to the Aleutians. Back row: Arthur Hustead and Dave Middleton. Front row: Gloria McDonald, Bob McDonald, and Dick Gardner.

steak. We were real short of food when we were first there, and on the other side of the island there was good fishing, so we'd go over there and land on the satellite strip. One time in mid-August we brought back home about fifty trout and salmon, and then we had a big fish fry, and that helped.

We lost pilots up there because of weather more than anything else. I had a lot of friends die up there. At the end of June, 1942 we lost our first P-38 pilot. We always called him Dave or Spider, and his last name was Middleton. He lost his bearings when he took off in the fog and hit the commissary tents where the food and flour were stored. I'll never forget the funeral. We made a box and loaded it onto a Jeep, then drove it up to the side of a mountain, and when the chaplain said the prayers, he went to find something to put on the casket before we put it into the hole in

the ground, and there wasn't anything. There was absolutely nothing growing up there. He finally found something that looked like a weed to me. It was very tiny, and he laid that on top of the casket, and that was it. It was raining and snowing. Everything that took place that day was bad. We had an awful time trying to find where we were even going to bury him. It was terrible.

At the beginning, most of our missions were just patrolling Umnak Island to protect the island from a Japanese attack, and then, of course, flying back and forth to Kiska because the Japanese had occupied it.

Some of our seaplane tenders were sent to Nazan Bay on the south side of Atka Island. The Japs started attacking these boats with their big four engine float planes. So, at the beginning of August we were ordered to fly combat air patrols over Nazan Bay. The P-38s were to be escorted



A P-38 flying over the Aleutian Islands

by B-24s and B-17s because our planes didn't have long range navigation over water. I went on the first flight with Frank Pope. We came back when we ran low on fuel. Later in the day Stan Long and Ken Ambrose got into some action. They shot down two Japanese sea planes. It was our first big action. They were big heroes.

In mid-August we had a number of congressmen come up to Umnak. They were up there on some kind of inspection. I actually thought they might be there asking about and investigating the sinking of that Russian freighter from a couple of months back. The committee arrived and we were told to go down the runway. They were all lined up there, and we pilots came down. I walked towards the senators, and this guy stepped up.

"Bob McDonald, how the hell are you? Just a minute. Your dad told me you guys were short of cigarettes. I brought you some."

He reached down and pulled out several cartons of cigarettes for the squadron. It was Senator Molly Malone. Nothing was ever

discussed about the ship. They all shot the breeze with us and told us, "Good to be here," and then they congratulated us for doing a good job. Finally Senator Malone said, "We'll see you later, and I'll tell your dad I saw you."

Molly Malone was my father's roommate at the University of Nevada. He was a family friend. He appeared, like the rest of them, to hardly know there was a place called the Aleutian Islands. They asked us questions like they didn't realize the importance of this part of the war. It appeared they were unaware of how close the Japanese were. It seemed like they didn't know the Japanese had actually flown and dropped bombs over Dutch Harbor. The whole situation was a great mystery to them.

At the end of August we had a big meeting at about 4:00 in the morning, and the purpose was to send two P-38s out to Atka over Nazan Bay again with a B-24 as navigator.

The commanding officer says "I want a couple of guys to go down and strafe there. So, does anybody want to go?"



Living quarters on Umnak Island.

I raised my hand and I said to Pope, "C'mon on Frank! Let's take that." Well, he couldn't get out of it at that. [laughter]

He couldn't say, "I don't want to go," and he was very fair about it.

He said, "Sure, let's go."

We were wing to wing with the B-24 as our leader and with Pope and me on either side of him. We got down there close to the island, looked around, and then everything closed in behind us. Just before we got to it, a storm came in and covered the island. Fog, fog, fog. We were going to strafe it, they'd never known we were coming, and it would have been an easy shot, I think, but we couldn't see one island. We flew high around in a circle. We couldn't tell where it was anymore. So, finally, we decided that we've got to get home, or we're going to run out of fuel. We called the B-24, and he was out in the boondocks somewhere flying around. He came over and met us. Pope was first lieutenant and I was second

lieutenant and Pope said, "We're going back." So we turned around and headed back home. We had just gotten to Atka, but away we go back to Umnak. We never flew over fifty feet above the water the whole time, even the B-24 bomber, because once you get up above this stuff, well, you can't get back down. We didn't have the navigational aids that they have today so we'd stay under, always. That was a rule.

We just hugged this B-24, and finally the B-24 pilot said, "If you fly straight for four or five minutes, you'll sight land."

Then Pope said, "I am the commanding officer. We'll *all* fly straight until we see land."

The B-24 pilot replied, "Yes, sir."

Finally, we got towards the back side of Umnak, and pretty soon we saw land, and we peeled off. The B-24 went around to the other side of the island and landed on the regular strip.

Pope claimed that we passed each other two or three times, but I didn't ever see him. Pope

said, "I found the little runway, and I see your airplane. Turn left." So I turned left and put my gear down, but I didn't find the runway, and didn't have enough fuel to go around another time. It'd been reading empty for twenty minutes, and we had already dropped our belly tanks. I told Pope, "I'm landing on the beach." We didn't see each other for awhile there, and I missed the runway by about the width of a road. I hit too hard so I landed it and ended nose down with me pointed to the ground. Just one wheel came off, but the nose gear was bouncing around sideways. It's funny as hell. I didn't get hurt very bad—I cut my knee a little bit and took the clock out. I unscrewed the clock and put it in my pocket. Some guys eventually came over and down a mountain in a Jeep and picked us up.

It was dark in the tent that morning, but as it turned out, the pilot flying the B-24 was a very close friend of my brother's. We finally met the pilot, and it happened to be Earl Edmunds. We

called him Axle Edmunds. He went to the University of Nevada. He was a skier born and raised in Truckee. He eventually lived in Carson after the war.

We moved to Adak during the second week of September [eleventh]. I was the first pilot of our squadron to land on Adak. Frank Pope was leading the flight, but his gear wouldn't come down so he told me to go ahead and land. I was flying on his wing. Otherwise, I'd never have been first. The conditions improved a little bit. We were in tents for several months but then got Quonset huts, and they were nice. There was more food and we'd get some liquor from a DC-3 pilot we knew, so he took care of us pretty good. We got along better, and we were closer to Kiska.

The first real big mission that the 54th flew was in mid-September. We had one too many pilots. We drew cards to see who would go, and who wouldn't. I drew a deuce. The guy next to me, McCoy, the school teacher, drew an ace and aces were high.



Bob's crash landed plane on Umnak Island.

I said to him, "How would you like to trade?" He said he'd love to. So he stayed home, and I went on the mission. It was a major attack on Kiska. We used everything that was available—B-24s, B-17s, P-39s and P-38s. The Japanese Navy was there. We strafed and bombed and did a lot of damage to the harbor. The B-24s and B-17s did some fairly low level bombing, so we surprised and blew their navy away.

That's the day we lost our Squadron Commander, T.W. Jackson. He was the greatest guy.

He got killed right in front of me. The Zero was going straight up. Jackson turned his P-38 into another one of our planes and they collided in mid-air as they were chasing the Zero. The other pilot was our engineering officer, Dewey Crowe. I saw it . . . a big flash. Bouf! Pieces of the airplanes came slowly down, lots of them, slowly into the water.

I made one more run. I didn't get a good run the first time because I was on the end when we went over Kiska, and I didn't get to shoot much, so I went out just to clear my conscience. I made another run, went home, and picked up with the

rest of them. I didn't know who it was until I landed.

It was interesting to watch those Japanese pilots on a good clear day. We'd come around going towards Kiska, and these Zeros would be flying around in the air. They'd roll up in front of us and do loops and all kinds of aerobatics. We were later advised that this was part of their game—to get our attention. An American pilot would be watching a Japanese pilot do a loop or a role, and another Zero would sneak up behind them and blow them out of the sky. They'd actually get above us and blow us away. There were great pilots, those Japanese Navy pilots.

I had an engine failure once on take-off at Adak. I had two belly tanks and was fully loaded with ammunition. I was just too late to re-land it. I'm over the Bering Sea out twelve miles. I hit the button and drop the belly tanks. I hit another button, and the prop stops and feathers. Then I try to turn it up, get some altitude, eventually, and "Just stay with it, stay with it, and stay with it." The toughest part for me was to get my knees to quit shaking. My engine kicked in, and I flew



The neighborhood on Umnak Island.



The 54th squadron moving to Adak in September 1942.

out over the Bering Sea and got a little speed and turned around, came back and landed it.

I was a lousy shot. [laughter] I had always thought that the tracers threw me. Instead of watching the airplane, I watched the tracer, I think. If I'd have been a good shot, I'd have been an ace the first day up there.

During my time on Adak I did shoot down one airplane [October 3, 1942]. It was just a typical mission that we would run anytime we could fly. We were over Kiska, and this Japanese plane pulled up, and I just happened to be at the right spot at the right time. It was one of the few times that I hit anything. As the four of us came around to that last island, Rat Island, there were three Japanese float planes flying around out there, and I just kept right on going. There were no other fighter aircraft that I had to worry about. I just went into them and started shooting and his left wing caught on fire. I just went in and blasted him.

On October 14, as far as we were concerned, the raid on Kiska, although considerable damage

was done, was very unsuccessful—Stockard came through Gertrude Cove behind Vic Walton and me with his left engine on fire—a result of anti-aircraft. He pulled up to one thousand feet, leveled off and bailed out. He landed safely in the water. Vic, Ambrose, and I circled him until all the bombers arrived. They dropped a life raft, but it over-shot him. The PBY reached him an hour and forty-five minutes after he hit the water, which was the poorest attempt at a rescue I have ever heard of. The Navy was 100% at fault for this casualty.

I was with Kenneth Ambrose in Anchorage when he took off from a flight in late November. I wouldn't go with him. We were bringing down two P-38s to Everett, Washington to have them retrofitted. Everyday we'd check the weather. Every day it was bad.

He told me, "I'm going tomorrow." His wife just had a baby and wanted to see that baby awful bad. "I don't care, give a *damn* what it's like, I'm going tomorrow," and that's the last anybody ever saw of him.

Ambrose and I had had a number of flights, and we had a few more than some of the others. There were a lot of new pilots being sent up to the Aleutians as we stayed there, so we were able to take some leave. The Air Corps eventually started routines of leave so a guy could go back to the States for awhile, and then come back up. We were told by the Brigadier General up there, "Take these planes into Washington to be repaired." We flew to Anchorage and had quarters there. Every morning we would go out and every morning it was zero-zero.

"I'm going."

I laughed and said, "Yes, you're some kind of a nut," and we argued and laughed about it. Then I saw he was really serious. I advised him and told him, "Don't do it unless the weather's on your side because it's not going to get any better as you go south."

That's the last I ever heard of Ambrose until a few years ago. He was found in Washington State on the east side of Mt. Baker by some hikers. The way they found the plane, they say, is that the landing gear had been let down. If that's true he was trying to land. I don't believe that. I think he flew too low and hit the mountain.

In the middle of March [1943], we were on our way home from a strafing mission off of Rat Island when the P-38 on my wing was smoking. The pilot was a kid from Los Angeles named Livisey. He belly landed on the shallow water on the windward side of the island. He got out of that airplane and when I flew over him, I saw him walking towards shore. I took one more look at him, and he only had about 20 feet of water before he hit land. The Navy Rescue PBY landed on the lee side of the island because of the swell of waves on the other side. Those guys ran across there, but when they got there he was already dead... just from the cold water.

Toward the end of Japan's occupation of the Aleutians, we were going out there every day over Kiska when good weather was available. Nobody

ever shot back at us at that point. There were no boats in the harbor. You couldn't see anybody or any activity even though we covered real low at about 20 feet off the ground. We'd come back and report, "There's nobody out there anymore." Pilot after pilot told the commanding officers this. The army came in, and I knew some kids from Reno. A close friend, Warren Hart, was in the army snow ski unit. They landed on Kiska and went ashore with some troops going on one side and other troops on another. It was foggy weather, as usual, and they finally get on top of a little mountain and start shooting at each other. They killed some of their own men by friendly fire. It turns out there wasn't a Japanese person on that island. They had been taken away by ship in the night.

On one island, Attu, we had the Marines land. We covered them with our planes flying around while they went up the mountain and got rid of most of the Japanese, either by killing them or by taking them as prisoners.

The Air Corps, especially the fighter pilots, weren't really soldiers. They weren't disciplined that way, and they didn't expect it. I expected it in the air, though, but I didn't care if they called me Major or Bob—it didn't make any difference to me as long as they did what I told them to do. We were a cocky bunch of guys, doing acts and tricks, so we thought.

There wasn't a character difference between the bomber pilots and the fighter pilots, but maybe after. In other words, when you were chosen for whatever a guy asked—he wanted to be a bomber pilot—if there was an opening and everything, they'd give that position, and he'd get to be a bomber pilot—assuming he got his wings, and he has flown—and somebody else wanted to be a fighter pilot. Some people liked to fly a fast plane, and some people liked to fly a bomber, but I don't think there was any difference in the people—maybe just what they enjoyed doing. Socially, it wasn't any more prestigious to be a fighter pilot than a bomber pilot.



Stream fishing on Umnak Island.

I wouldn't want to go through that Aleutian battle again. They did everything they could to get rid of us. Half of my original squadron didn't survive, but those guys were something else.

When I was in Portland and everybody was getting ready to go overseas, this one fellow got a Saint Christopher medal from his aunt. He didn't want it.

He asked me, "Do you want it?"

I grabbed it and put it on, and I wore it all through the war. I was glad I took it, and I believed in it, and still do. My friend got killed, but I don't blame it on that because I've always felt like I was kind of lucky. Lots of luck. I wasn't that good of a pilot. I just had a lot of luck.

When I left the Aleutians, I returned to the States on my first leave. I was sent to Glendale just training new kids. I was an instructor of P-38s. My wife moved down there with me. I liked the area and liked the ocean, and we got to go

fishing once in a while on a day off, but I was anxious to go back. I volunteered for every overseas duty that was available.

We had a C.O., Lieutenant General Chennault, who flew with that group, the first AVG [American Volunteer Group], before World War II in China, and they were called the Flying Tigers. Then when the war officially started, he re-enlisted for the Air Corps right away. Now, he was really a wonderful person. He came up to me and introduced himself.

I had just been in Glendale about a day, and he said, "Do you mind going and doing an inspection of those enlisted men out there?" meaning, the barracks, where they lived, to see that they made their beds in their little cabins.

I said, "Sure." So I started down there, but I said, "Could I take him with me?" There was a sergeant standing there next to me, and that's where I ran into Al Barbieri. [laughter] He was the sergeant. I *knew* it when I saw him.

He said, "Go ahead," and laughed. So Al and I did the inspections. He told me he wanted to go to England.

We got back to the main office and I told Chenault, "He wants to go to Europe. What do you think?"

He said, "Tell him not to unpack." [laughter] Al left the next day. He wasn't a pilot, and I think he was a first sergeant.

When I was in Glendale I used to bring guys up to Reno. I got in trouble, too. Terrible trouble. I got grounded when I was in town, and another time when I was home on leave for a couple of weeks, I was flying a little airplane, a little single airplane, and went out to the airport one day to fool around and fly it. I think I had somebody with me. We were just flying around Reno and pretty well behaving ourselves, but out by Earl Avansino's family ranch on Huffaker Lane south of Reno, Mr. Avansino was cutting hay. He had a small operation going on with his equipment, and I buzzed it. He was sitting on the tractor, and he didn't hear me coming. I came in from the rear. I missed him by about ten feet, probably. It wasn't very smart on my part, but I scared him, and he went down on the ground. I went out and apologized to him later. He thought it was funny then. He was a great Italian friend of mine. I didn't do that anymore.

After about six months of being in Glendale, which I didn't enjoy a bit—I didn't like being an instructor—I went to Ephrata, Washington. A fellow named John Singleton and myself were selected to pick twenty-five pilots for a commander, a General, named Hank Thorne. He was a full Colonel then. We were to train, pick our own pilots, and go to Hawaii and train in P-47s. We were first taken to Burney, Nebraska. We flew P-47s and then we were to go to Hawaii, but just before we left, the Air Corps called Thorne and took him to Washington, so we got a new commander. I was in the 484th unit, a fighter squadron. We weren't attached at the time. We

went to Kahuku Army Air Base at the north end of Oahu and had the old P-47s we flew in, but we were going to get the new P-47s. From Okinawa we were going to be the first fighters to fly to Japan. All that blew up for reasons we never knew.

At the end of January of 1945, I got in a fight in Hawaii, and they grounded me. That happened when we came from the States for the second or third time, and I was in the 468th fighter squadron on Oahu. We had to stay on the island in a certain part, Kahuku Army Base. I'd only been there about three weeks. We couldn't go off the base, but they finally said that they were going to have a party for us at Hickman Field.

"Be back on this base at midnight."

So, after the party, there were five of us guys in a Jeep, and we drove into downtown Honolulu because we were taking a couple of them back to the Alexander Young Hotel.

A civilian policeman drove up beside us and yelled, "Pull over," so we went through the light and pulled over. He says, "Where in the hell do you think you're going? When I say, 'Pull over,' I mean pull over to the curb."

I got out of the jeep and went up to him and asked him, "What's the matter?" He brushed past me and headed to the jeep. I followed behind.

Then finally he said, "Where's your blackout pass?"

I was not the driver, but I was the highest ranking officer, a Major. We finally found the blackout pass in my pocket.

I asked if we could leave.

Anyway, it wound up in a very, very serious, dangerous fistfight because the cop went after me. He took the first swing at me, hitting me in the jaw. No question about it! One of the other guys was a first lieutenant from West Point, and *he* got in it some, Lieutenant Hughes, and *he* helped me. He got me away from the cop and brought me back to the Jeep. It was a Sunday Punch. I finally came to and went back over and

hit the cop! Lieutenant Hughes again brought me back to the Jeep. Then a bunch more civilian policemen show up and grab Hughes and start beating him up. Another cop reached in the jeep and pulled me out. Then they made one mistake. They put the handcuffs *in front of me* instead of behind me. Some MPs with a wagon arrive. Somebody is choking the hell out of me. Whoever it was thought I was dead. He cuffed me and put me in the back of the wagon. I put my head down, and I just went limp, purposely, so he thought I was dead in the back of that wagon. But when an MP opened the door to the wagon, I hit him with my handcuffed hands! But the long and short of it is they took me downtown to the police station, and as the policeman that had arrested me was filling out his report of what happened during the night, I went boom! And I got him again—from the rear. With that, they threw me in a cell. Some Army Air Corps officers that Bud Hustead, my friend from the Aleutians, sent down to the police station came and got us out at about three or four o'clock in the morning, and I went back to our base. We had a kind of a jerk as a head guy, and our company had three squadrons, and he was the head of all of them. He said, "Your job now is no flying, and you just run the airport. You tell people where they can go, when they can go, but *no* flying, because you're going to be court-martialed."

I said, "That's fine." I meant what I said.

I just worked there and got people airplanes. They borrowed them. If they needed airplanes to go somewhere, I'd get them one, and things of that nature. This one guy came along—he'd just been promoted to a general, and he wanted to go to another island so I called one of the lieutenants and told him to give him a ride over to where his base was. He thanked me, and that was it.

I was tried in downtown Honolulu in the middle of March, 1945. It was just a regular court trial, like you'd have here in Reno. I was charged



Bob and his friend Arthur "Bud" Hustead.

with resisting arrest, striking an MP officer, *not* the civilian officer, and using obscene language in a public place. I had a Jewish, second lieutenant lawyer from New York. He was just assigned to me. I didn't choose him, but he was pretty darn good. He visited me. I didn't know anybody on that island, lawyers or civilians, and he came there and helped me a lot, talked to me, told me when to talk, when not to talk and various things, because I obviously hadn't been to law school. What he taught me was this: if I wasn't sure of anything, or if I was afraid to answer a question, or I was to say something, I was to say it and then finish with "Or words to that effect."

I'm sitting in the courtroom right in the front row, of course, with him, and all of a sudden, though—the best thing—was when the jury walked

in. They walked right by *me* to get up to their seats, and the third guy was the guy I had gotten the airplane ride for when he wanted to go back to his base, so I *knew* I had some help in there.

The girl court reporter sat right in front of me, and they'd ask us a question, and we'd have to tell them the truth. The language was bad, but we quoted it just like it was said, and just like the police said. We had to do all of the swearing, most of it, in the courtroom, because they *wanted* us to say it *exactly*, and the court reporter was taking all this down, and I'm looking at the back of her neck and see it get red, and then turn white, and then get red, and it was kind of tough on me. [laughter] I did all that swearing right behind this lady, but I had to do it.

As it turned out, *all* of the jurors voted me not guilty—like that. It didn't take very long. Then they told me that I'd have to stay there for a minute. They wanted to talk to me. The head guy told me "We know your background, and we know your decorations, and we know you've been a fine pilot," and we know this and this. "But you shouldn't get mad at somebody like that. There's your big mistake, and you're lucky you're not in jail." That was because I took a swing at the civilian cop, originally, you know, but the head juror complimented me. But I always thought they got that right, where I was a hell of a guy! [laughter]

I don't think that that experience influenced me into wanting to be an attorney because I wasn't thinking that way at that time in my life. All I was thinking about is getting the war over.

So I went back to the base, and now I can do whatever I want; it was just like it never happened—I went down to headquarters and told them, "I want to go out to Iwo Jima, where I can fly and get some more fighting." So I went out there by myself, but first stopped at Guam, and they wouldn't give me a job because there were too many pilots at my rating. I was a major, and it was hard to get a job because the squadron

commanders were usually captains. Then I hitched a ride to Iwo Jima. Finally, one guy, General Mikey Morris on Iwo Jima, called me up to his headquarters.

He said, "I read the papers about you. That was pretty wild, wasn't it?"

"Yes."

Then he asked, "Have you ever flown a P-51?"

I said, "Well, just a little bit. I had one flight in it."

He said, "You ever been a full squadron commander?"

I said, "No, but I've been assistant a lot of times."

He said, "Well, you got a squadron. We just lost a squadron commander in the Forty-Sixth Squadron. It so happened that we had our squadron commander killed last night in a banzai attack. A bunch of Japs are still on the island, and they got full of sake, and they came running through the pilot's hangars."

So right there I had fifteen airplanes, and we did good. We really did good. We were flying for the toughest pilot that ever walked, and that was Curtis Lemay of the 20th Air Force. We were escorting B-29s.

One time, when I was the lead airplane and I pulled out probably twenty miles from the target, my engine failed. I'm up, probably, twelve thousand feet. Nobody can wait for you because fuel was important; it was really important. Everybody else headed south for Hiro. I was going to bail out, and I couldn't get the canopy open. It was stuck. I put the nose down to look for a place to land and the engine started running again.

We had four submarines stationed all the way between the coast of Japan and Iwo Jima. They were about 200 to 250 miles apart. They were your navigational aid. I was now separated from my squadron and watching my fuel. I found the first one. They were called Dumbo One, Two, Three and Four. I headed over Dumbo One and called Dumbo Two. He answered me and told

me to fly 179 degrees because it was just about a 180 degree course south—I'm just going due south. I called him again and finally I said, "Dumbo Two, where are you located?" [laughter]

"You dummy," he said, "if you dip your wing a little, you'll look right at me." [laughter] He was right under me, and I couldn't see him. I didn't know where the hell I was. I got home. When they flew that airplane, they tried to find what was wrong with it. The engineering officer would fly it a lot. Each squadron had their own test pilot. He flew missions, but he was a mechanic in civilian life. We never did take that plane on another mission, but we never did find anything wrong with it.

Probably the saddest thing that ever happened to me in the war—I would think of it more than anything—was what happened to a young kid from Texas, and he was really a nice person. He was in the squadron, and every time he'd go on a flight towards Japan, something would go wrong with his airplane. He'd call, "The engine is rough," or "It indicates it's hot, and I'm going back."

So the CO called me in one day and said, "I'm going to get rid of that kid. He's just not doing us any good, and he's scared to death, and I'm going to send him back to the States."

I said, "Let me talk to him. Give me one chance with him." So I went back, called him over, and I said, "What the hell is wrong with you? You know there's nothing wrong with these airplanes."

He said, "I can't swim. I'm scared of the water."

I said, "Well, if you go down, you can get into that dinghy."

He said, "No, I'd panic. But I don't want to be kicked out of here. I want to leave here honorably."

I said, "Well, tomorrow we're going to take a mission, and you're going to fly right on my wing. Do everything I do and we'll get there and back."

So he did. We had a nice mission. He stayed right there. We got *back*. We got within forty miles from Iwo, and his engine failed, and he bailed out. He said, "I'm going to bail out. I got a rough engine that's going to quit." He jumped out of the airplane, and there he goes down, down. I went down, and I circled and circled and circled, never did see him. I dove down there, and he was gone, never came up. I'll tell you, that really tore me up.

So I wrote his folks a letter, and that's all I could do. But I always was pretty sad about that, because I think he was a good pilot, and a guy that had all kinds of nerve, but he was afraid of water. It really frightened him because he bailed out. I saw him, and he was in perfect condition.

I really do think there was something wrong with his plane because he was close enough then to land on the base. But in any event, there could have been a lot of things wrong with him that we didn't know about and that his folks didn't know. I got a nice letter back from them thanking me. But it was pretty sad, because he was a good guy, good person. But that was one of my worst experiences in the war that I can remember.

I wrecked a few airplanes. I had another very fortunate wreck on Iwo. We're flying P-51s, and we were advised, I think, and told, to always take off with the airplane's canopy open. It was dusty there, and I was taking off, and I closed that thing. I did every time I took off. Well, the engine died before I ever got to the end of the runway. I tipped it over and purposely hit the side of the runway into the dirt because I had that canopy closed, and I knew I'd drown or kill myself trying to get out because I would have gone into the ocean right off the runway. The engine wasn't running anymore, but the airplane continued to fly. I wanted to land somewhere before I got to the water. I crash landed sideways on the side of the strip. The canopy was closed, *stuck*, and I couldn't open it because I'd bent everything when



One of Bob's many crash landed planes.

I'd hit. No way could I break that glass with my fist, because it just wouldn't break. It's some kind of plastic, and I pounded on it, and I'm just stuck there at the side. An enlisted man came down in a Jeep. The thing's smoking, I'm pounding, and he pulled at it with an axe, opened the door up on top, and then helped me out. When I got out, the airplane was burning. We just drove away as fast as we could to get the hell out of there, you know, and it never did explode, but it burned and burned until they came down and put it out. I might have been fortunate enough to have survived it, I don't know. We'll never know that, but it didn't blow up like everybody thought it would. It was just luck.

They never taught us about the mechanical workings of the airplane. I wouldn't have understood it if they did. [laughter] I never was interested in that type of thing, but they didn't teach us anything other than, "That's the throttle, and these are the brakes," and various things on

how to fly it, fly together in formation, and how to shoot out of it. But as far as the mechanics of the airplane, I didn't know *anything* about it, and neither did anybody else, unless they were one of those people that were naturally that way. So we didn't have to fix our own airplanes, because we *couldn't* fix them.

Once I was in the air, I couldn't do anything, anyway. If the gear wouldn't come down, I knew all the tricks you had to *try to make* it come down. Maybe it wouldn't, but I knew all that stuff. If I couldn't fix it in the air, I couldn't fix it. I just talked to my crew chief. If something went wrong, he'd tell me what he did to fix it, and I'd say, "Fine." [laughter]

I had my same crew chief all the time in the Aleutians. I became real buddies with him, real friends. I gave him hell for my one engine failure up there every time I saw him at the Air Races. Chief Hildebrand. He was originally from Oklahoma. We called him Chief, and he loved

that. His name was Melvin Hildebrand and eventually lived in Redding, California. Big Indian. I don't know if he was full blooded, but he had a lot of it in him. He was the one that made sure my plane flew, and my engine was working right. You know, I was always overly helpful to those people. If I got to Anchorage to get a little bit of whiskey, I always made sure that most of the guys got their share of it, because they were my friends.

If I had a problem with my plane, I couldn't land anyplace that I ever flew, because I was either over the water, or I would've been in a bad place on the ground. If a pilot was *physically* OK, the only thing he wanted to do is get out of that airplane before it started on fire. On any of those airplanes, there's no way a guy can break the canopy with his fist. My fist was bleeding, and I didn't even make a *dent* in it on that one crash I had.

If I would've ever got shot down in enemy territory, all I had was a .45 that hadn't been cleaned since I got it and probably wouldn't have fired. I had it in the airplane, but I rarely carried it. We wore a pair of coveralls, a warm flight jacket and rubber flight boots that were lined. They were heavy, but they were real comfortable. We had a little heater in the airplane, too.

When flying out of the Pacific from Iwo, we had a dinghy in the plane for when a pilot bailed. A pilot could get out of that parachute, pull that button for the dinghy, and a little raft would open up for him. It had supplies; a flashlight, and rockets that would shoot flares. But in the Aleutians, we didn't have anything like that, because a person could only live about twenty minutes in the water because of the cold temperature, so we didn't carry anything.

I saw the first atom bomb airplane. We had a weather plane from Guam fly over Iwo every morning and report back the weather before we took off. It was just a single B-29. Well, there were no missions on this particular day and there went this B-29 right over Iwo. We all said we

couldn't figure why they were flying the weather plane that day. I said, "Well, maybe they'll send us up. Maybe there's going to be a mission." I had no idea what it was.

On the second bomb, I was going on a rest leave. I was in a B-29 going to Oahu for a week. The captain flying the B-29 called and said, "The war has just ended," so the plane was diverted and flew into Guam instead. I had four pilots with me, and our plan was to hitchhike, get another B-29 to Hawaii, and continue on our rest leave, but nobody was to leave. We didn't have any liquor, and we didn't know anybody. We were officers, but there in the officer's club, those guys put their names on a bottle! So I got to talking with the bartender, and eventually, he found out I was from Reno and he said, "You wouldn't know a Dr. Lombardi, from Reno, would you?"

I said, "Yes, I do, very well." [laughter]

He got a hold of him and Louie came down. He was head of the hospital on Guam at the time. We had a lot of food, a lot of booze—anything we wanted. He didn't drink himself, but we had a great party there before we ever went to Hawaii. He told me that night he'd amputated something like 128 legs. He was our family doctor in Reno, and I knew him real well. Oh man, had I known him, so it worked out good.

I never did find any *real*/bad pilots as persons. Well, I guess we had one up in Washington when we were getting ready to go up to the Aleutians, and I never did enjoy his company, anyway. We'd play poker every night and if anybody knew anything about cards, I did, because I was raised here in Reno. I caught him slipping some cards under his leg so he could pull them out and use them to make a straight, or a flush, or whatever he was going to use. I watched him about two or three different times, but I let it go, and I never said anything until the next night. Then I got a little excited and hit him under the chin and knocked him over to the flight area. They had a little hearing about it, and they didn't do anything

to me. Most of them thought it was the thing to do, and they kicked him out. I don't know what ever happened to him. They kicked him out for cheating while playing cards. Well, he was dishonest, and it got him out of our squadron. I don't think he ever flew anymore. I never heard anything more of him. I never did think he was a very good pilot. He couldn't be a good pilot if he was really dishonest like he was. He'd cheat his own people that he was supposedly flying with. So that was a character flaw that he had. He's a type of person I didn't want to fly next to when I was in a war fighting to save my own life and whatever else goes with it. I couldn't trust him, and, well, I didn't want him with me.

Other reasons they would kick someone out of the Air Corps would be, for example, after a guy graduated from flight school, and he started flying on his own in a group or in a squadron, and they just watched him fly. If he wasn't a good pilot, and they could see from the ground that he wasn't doing well, they would wash him out.

I had a personal experience where I could have been kicked out, and they didn't do anything to me, but they could have. We'd practice shooting ground targets. We'd go around in circles and come down and strafe it with fifty calibers. I was coming down to strafe it, and then I pulled up, but the plane's tail sunk down, and it hit the ground. The back end of my plane hit the ground, and, unbelievably, to most people, it didn't hurt anything. I went back when I was supposed to and landed at the airport where we were training, and there was no sign of anything. The plane just touched the ground and came off, but I was lucky. Well, I think I laughed when it was all over, but there wasn't anything to brag about, I'll tell you that. I didn't do it anymore.

They wouldn't kick you out of the Air Corps for drinking, that I know of, unless somebody was a drunk. There wasn't much drinking unless we were finished for the day. If they ever caught us drinking and getting into an airplane, we'd be

gone. There was never a bottle of liquor that would go into a fighter airplane by a fighter pilot. They just knew better. I mean, we couldn't do it. If a guy took a bottle of Scotch with him and took one swallow of that, and then something happens, and he had to get in a fight real quick with an enemy airplane, well, it's going to be harmful. I don't even remember anybody ever discussing it. We just knew that if we drank too much or drank anything, we were in trouble.

We all had soldiers, not pilots, but mechanics that were in the service. They weren't officers, but they were first-class people, and I never remember having trouble with any of them. I was on many different fields, and I never heard of any trouble. Just didn't do it. You know, the atmosphere is different when you're in a war than when you're not in a war, I imagine. If you're just playing around with airplanes, we might get some bad people, but if we're training to go to war, or we've been to war, and we're instructing, we're not going to fool around with any liquor.

In every squadron, I would say, there would be about twenty-five pilots, and that's a fair number in those days for fighter pilots. If we had a bad person in there, the rest of our people would get rid of him. They'd just go to the C.O. and tell him what Joe Jones down there was up to, "We saw him last night. He was drunk downtown," or something, and he'd just kick him out the next day, and you never knew how. I mean, they didn't have any hearings or anything. They just transferred him to Hemet, California, or somewhere.

We had a guy who was our C.O. [Captain Griffin] in the Aleutians that was in bad shape. Bud Hustead and I are the ones that got him out of there. He was living in our Quonset Hut. He was drunk all the time, and he wouldn't fly on a mission, either. If he did, he would get a little ways down and find something wrong, turn around, come back, and nothing, normally, was wrong. We'd test his airplane, and it'd be fine. He

wouldn't bathe at all, and the odor got so bad in there that I went to the general. Bud and I went to the general and said, "We're going to throw him out in a snow bank." There was a lot of snow out there then, and this was going to be the end.

Well, I enjoyed flying, and I enjoyed doing tricks that I could do with airplanes. I wasn't the greatest pilot in the Air Corps, but I was equally as good as most of them. I had in mind that maybe I would remain in the Air Corps and retire someday as a full colonel or a general, but after I went through the war, and during that time, there was something that I didn't like. I didn't know what it was yet, but something kind of changed my mind as to whether I wanted to do things like that the rest of my life. At first, I decided that as soon as I can get discharged, the way I'm supposed to, that I'd stay out, and then I thought about it more, and said to myself, "Maybe I will stay in longer."

I got down to Sacramento from Hawaii after the war was over, and Gloria picked me up, and that's when they gave me a choice—I either re-enlisted or was discharged.

I said to Gloria, "What if I stay in? I could do that and get an automatic promotion to lieutenant colonel for being so much overseas. They'd give that to me. He said he would turn me loose right now, and I won't have to come back for a couple of months."

She said, "Go ahead. And if you do, you're leaving me, because I'm not going to stay in. And if you want to see me, you can come to Reno." [laughter] You'd be moving here, you're moving there, if you're in that service."

I could've gone to Germany, or I'd be coming back to Japan, or I'd have to go to Hawaii or someplace. A guy's got a wife and children, and he's just a complete *wreck*. I knew a lot of guys that wished they hadn't.

So I went along with her, and whether I did good or bad I'll never know, but that is the truth.

I was going to stay in, and positive I would have. But, you know, I think I did the right thing!

So I selected to be discharged, and we drove back to Reno. I am glad that I didn't stay in. We had some great people that stayed in, but they never did make it out alive. One of the best pilots we *had*, O'Brien, he stayed in, and he was flying a P-38 somewhere in the Midwest, and he had a bad engine, but he got it fixed. Then he taxied it down part of an old runway in a field, but he didn't take it all the way down the runway, he just took part of it, and he didn't have enough power to get off the field, and that killed him, burned him up. He blew up in it. He was a great pilot, Gloria knew him real well, and he was a cocky, little, good guy. A lot of things happened that maybe wouldn't happen in civilian life, so I think that's what probably changed my mind.

So when I came back from the war, I got all my money together and bought a 1941 Ford V-8. We got paid for our accumulated leave when we got discharged, and I had won a little bit in poker, so I compiled all that to pay \$1175 for that beautiful blue convertible. We drove to Mexico City and Guadalajara and all around.

Then my brother and I started a spray painting business in Reno, but spray painting was against the union rules. We were hired by the chairman of the county commission to paint the race track. We had an ex-felon, who had been in the federal penitentiary, working for us, and he was really the only one who knew anything about painting, but we learned. We bought equipment, and we'd get out there and kick those machines on at three o'clock in the morning, and at daylight, around seven probably, the head of the union—that was Harry Depaoli then—would come out there and shut us down. [laughter] The ex-felon, Earl was his name, almost got in a fight asking for his human rights in the United States of America. [laughter] He learned all that in prison, I guess.

Harry went to my dad because they were friends, and he said, "If you'll send those kids up



Gloria with their 1941 Ford V-8 convertible, ca. 1945.

to Lake Tahoe to paint, we won't bother them a bit, but they can't do it here. They can't spray paint in this area."

So we went up to my folk's little old cabin up in Zephyr Cove and took our wives and kids where we made some pretty good money. That was really a lot of fun. We charged seven cents a square foot. We painted the average house in probably thirty minutes. But at the end of the summer, that was it, because in those days nobody ever lived at Lake Tahoe during the winter, nobody.

I figured I had better get smart and get something better. I didn't have a degree from college because I still needed a science credit so I came up to the university and got a year's credit for biology in one semester. That was hard, but I got the top grade in the class, and I think I took journalism or something, too, to make up some credits, and that wasn't difficult.

I had to sell my car in order to go to law school for about \$600 to \$700 to a fellow who was dealing cards at Harrah's. So with that money, the G.I. Bill, and along with a little money we

had saved, I went to law school. I also had a job in the library—sweeping out the library and keeping it clean—I'd have to do that every day after going to school—that paid me something, it wasn't very much, but it was a lot then to help me through school, and it was a nice place. In fact, there was a fellow here in Reno named Paul Richards, who was behind me a year, and I gave him that job when I left, and then I hired him when he graduated and passed the bar.

No one talked me into going to law school, but my dad used to say, when we were growing up, that he'd always wanted to be a lawyer, but he never had the money to go. But I'm certain that I thought of going to law school myself and maybe talked to some friend, although it wasn't with anybody that was going to law school at the time. I just had to do something. Either I thought of it, or somebody mentioned it, "Why don't you try law school?" It's really an easy thing to do if you want to put the time in, but they flunked out a lot of people in those days. Law school was difficult for me at first because I had to get those proper habits and adhere to them. I had to do it

like a religion. I studied from seven to midnight, if that's what my schedule was, and had to do it every day, and, you know, I did that. Finally, it worked out, but it was difficult for me to settle down. I had to do a lot of reading, a lot of memorizing, and be ready to take a lot of exams. But it's not difficult because anybody can understand it—it's just the time I had to spend studying it.

Gloria was good to be with to do that, because she took care of everything else, and it worked out real well. We lived on Scott Street in San Francisco and about ten blocks further west up on top of the hill on Fulton Street was the University of San Francisco Law School. I just lived with Gloria, and our son, Boo, and then we had Martha. It was kind of tough going there because we didn't have a lot of room, and those apartment buildings were built close together. We had a bathroom, living room, kitchen, and one little extra room in there somewhere. It was really kind of tiny, but it worked. When I went downstairs, there was a big, tough, old guy that kept the place open or closed, and we had to go through him sometimes to get into our apartment because it was kind of a tough part of San Francisco at the time, but we never had any problems. Then we had another car for a while, and we'd ride up to Reno in that.

There were study groups, but I didn't do that because I didn't like that. I could've got with other guys, but I didn't see a way to study law that way. I had to get by myself, and I had to read a lot and memorize a lot of things. I did it alone mostly at home. I didn't hang around the library and all that. Besides, we'd get doing things we shouldn't—get talking about a football game or something when we should be studying. I *had* to study, because I had nothing to do after I got out of the Air Corps, and I was sorry *at the time* that I ever left the service.

The only person I studied with was Tom Ward, who was born and raised in Antioch. He

graduated from West Point, was in the service, and now going to law school just like me. He was a good friend, and happily married to Sarah. Eventually, we both graduated, but it was kind of a tough go. None of us had very much money to spend, and we didn't have any time to spend it, anyway, because he and I weren't natural students. [laughter] I wasn't the head of the class, but I did good. We had to really work for it, but we got good grades and graduated, and we both passed the bar. In fact, I got the top point rating in the Nevada State Bar Examination that year, which was a surprise, but not because I'm bright—it was just doing it.

Then getting a job and going forward from there was easy, although I believe I kind of got into bad trouble when I started—it never helped me a lot, anyway. Bill Woodburn—he was the lead firm in Reno then by far—Woodburn and so and so. They invited me over, and I went and visited with them. I probably did tell them I would come to them as soon as I passed the bar. But after that, I decided not to go with them, and that made Mr. Woodburn kind of dislike me. He was a good friend of my dad's, and they were involved together with a lot of community things, but I didn't want to go there. I just wanted to do something else. Woodburn and his partners were very formal and very top lawyers, but that didn't bother me any, and what I mean is that I was as smart as any of them, I think, but I just wanted to go somewhere smaller, which I did.

After I got admitted to the Nevada Bar, I went out to Bill Sanford, and he gave me a job. His father, Bill Sanford Sr., was a friend of my dad's through the newspaper business. Bill Sanford Jr. was a lawyer much older than I was. The job didn't amount to much, and after I fooled around in Reno for a while, I went to work for Alan Bible over in Carson City because Senator McCarran called me and asked me if I wanted to work for the state, and I told him I sure did. He called and told Alan Bible to, when he had a

vacancy, let Bob McDonald have it. It turned out he had one, so I joined Alan Bible, who was the Attorney General at that time. I was a Deputy Attorney General in the state of Nevada, together with two other lawyers. They were elderly guys, William T. Mathews and Bill Cane. I became Bible's man.

I lived up by the university on Williams Avenue with Gloria and the kids so I'd drive to Carson City every morning and be there by eight o'clock. It was really rather simple. I would drive right down Virginia Street from the university all the way to Bible's office on Main Street. I could do it probably in twenty-five minutes from my house, because there was no traffic. Can you imagine driving down Virginia Street *now* to get through town? This was going straight through town every day. There just wasn't anybody around!

I'd do a lot of traveling to Las Vegas, and other various towns. The district attorney was usually involved in whatever went wrong in a district, and as Deputy Attorney General, I'd have to go and take the DA's place because of a conflict

of interest, for example. That often happened because, at that time, the District Attorney could also have a private practice so all DAs in those days had private practices, because there were *just* enough lawyers. Every county had to have a District Attorney, and most of them always had an assistant and maybe one that worked for them in private practice.

Another thing that I was responsible for, as Deputy Attorney General, is that I would go to a particular county and *check up* on the District Attorney and if I found out that the DA was stealing or doing something, I would report back to Alan. One of the DAs got involved with some, I suppose you'd call it stealing, from the city itself and the state, and he was using the information in his private practice.

Some of the information that I'd learn from my inquiries was too valuable for me to let out to the public. So I'd take it back to Alan Bible, and he'd find some way to get rid of the DA. He *would*. He'd get rid of the person and call a re-election, or else if it was near the end of the term, he'd appoint somebody, and nobody ever objected to that. We didn't go public with what they did wrong or air their dirty laundry, and we'd just continue to operate like nothing happened. Alan Bible was an extremely fair-and-square man, and he was the type of person that didn't want to hurt anybody else. He'd rather take them in his office and tell them what they did wrong and why they shouldn't have done it and what things that were available for them in lieu of their misconduct. Normally, they'd all work out fine.

Well, that was why he was such a popular man. Because he tried to help instead of hurt everybody. If there was something they'd done wrong, and it was not completely criminal or required a sentence, he'd take it over himself and always have the problem solved. He was very fair that way. There's seventeen counties in Nevada, so he had seventeen counties to worry about.



Alan Bible

He lived in Carson, and he walked to work from his house for about a half a block to his office. He did all his own work until he started traveling around the state. He made it a point to get to every county every once in a while, and looking back, he probably at that time in his life was intending, "One of these days I'm going to get elected to the senate or be governor."

When I went to work for Alan Bible, I didn't really know him—he was just an acquaintance. McCarran was the original connection for me because Alan had worked for McCarran and McCarran was friends with my father. My dad would *have had* to know Alan when he was appointed Deputy Attorney General and then elected as Attorney General, but, even before that, my dad was friendly with him, I'm certain, because anybody that was "with" McCarran in those days all wound up together.

So Alan and I became friends, and later on I was very close to him. But as far as getting the job as Deputy Attorney General, had anybody else been available at the time, he would have probably chosen them instead of me.

I guess I was a "McCarran boy," but I never went back to Washington D.C. and worked for him like my brother did. I thought of it and had a chance and never did want to do it. But I did have what I would call it an interesting conversation, and the result of a conversation with the Senator. I was in my office in Carson City, and one day the girls that were answering the phones downstairs called to me upstairs and said, "Bob, Senator McCarran wants to talk to you." I was about half scared then, because what would Senator McCarran want to talk to me for?

He said, "Bob, I want you to do something I want you to tell Alan Bible you're going to work for the U.S. Government." He said, "You're not getting enough trial practice there. If you don't get a lot of trial practice, you'll never be a good

lawyer. So go in, and I'll talk to him, too. Resign from there, and then your job is over in Reno now as a deputy in the United States Attorney's office." I went to work for the U.S. government trying *lots* of cases.

Alan had responded with agreement. He said, "That's a good idea." He and McCarran were awfully close friends, but he did say, "That's going to be an awful lot of work, because in our type of law here in this building, we don't get much trial practice. We get Supreme Court *arguments* after somebody else has done all the work and tried the case before a jury, but you won't get to *do* that, unless you go to work for the government or in a private practice."

I was there for a couple of years, at *least*. I worked with Bruce Thompson and he was one of the most, I think, famous and best lawyers in this state at the time. I practiced with him, and we became good, close friends from all our trips together to Vegas and wherever we had to go. He was an outstanding lawyer. There are a number of lawyers who were in there that I became closely acquainted with and tried cases with them and learned how to pick a jury, and learned all these things, *the easy way*, without reading about all of it, but by just *doing* it, like speaking before the jury and this type of thing. So that was a good experience for me.

The first partner I had was Alan Bible in the *Gazette* Building, just the two of us way up at the top of the building there. [laughter] Top of the building, which was probably three floors or two floors or something. When Alan Bible did not run again for his job as Attorney General and I resigned from being a Deputy Attorney General under Mathews, and as I was appointed to the U.S. Attorney General's office, he and I opened a practice of our own in the *Gazette* building—Bible and McDonald. He came to Reno and moved right over by our house on Crocker Way. After the first month, we started going over the phone bill, saying who made that phone call and replying,

"I don't know." We had one girl trying to figure out long distance calls.

Alan said, "Why do we want to go through this. Why don't we just be partners? Then we won't have to worry about it."

I said, "OK."

So we were partners. Never got anything in writing. Never. Everyone knew we were partners, and even after he was elected—until the American Bar suggested that it wasn't proper. How did we divide the money? *Fifty-fifty*. He said, "I don't want to do any of that percentage business. We'll each take half, whatever we get." That's the way we started, and we had one secretary between us. She was a redhead and was with us for a long time.

He was a good person to work with. He just had a great sense of humor—was comical—and he liked to tell stories. He was very fine. He was serious in his business pretty much, but he was a lot of fun. He was always full of jokes, and no dirty stories, or anything like that, but just jokes and just kind of wry—with aside comments. He was a very brilliant person. He came out of Fallon to Reno. He was just an A student at the university. He was a very good speaker, and that was great for a jury trial or arguing with the judges and submitting your case to them. He was good at that, because he had such a great mind, and he could select the language he wanted.

It was about four years that Alan and I practiced together before he became our U.S. Senator—after McCarran died and he won the special election. He had taken a shot at it earlier, but that Mechling, a no good phony son-of-a-bitch, beat him out in the democratic primary. Mechling then lost to Malone.

After he went to Washington, it wasn't easy. I was alone then for a long time, but his name stayed on the door even though he was not on the payroll anymore. When my brother, Joe McDonald, and Ralph Denton were in Las Vegas and they started their law firm, they put "Bible, McDonald" on *their* door [laughter]

I worked with a couple of other lawyers for awhile. Bob Moore and Dyer Jensen both worked with me at various times.

There was a McDonald lawyer here in Reno, very well known in the state. He went to school in England at Oxford—a Rhodes Scholar. He worked at the legislative counsel and later became Washoe County manager. Good guy. He was a personal friend of our family, too. So I called Russ McDonald and said, "Russ, I need a lawyer. Where do I get one? I'd like to get a lawyer up here. Have you've got anybody that's looking for a job?"

He says, "In Sparks, a city attorney. I think he'd like to go with you, and he'd probably come up there if you could pay him enough. He's pretty good. He's a pretty fair lawyer, and then we got another real good lawyer—a guy that's working over here for me named Don Carano. You're going to have to tame him down a little bit, but he's going to be a great lawyer, but pretty hard to hold him down if you want to take that chance.



Alan Bible, Bob, and Joe Jr. before the special election to fill the late Senator McCarran's senate seat, ca. 1954.



Ralph Denton

He's wild, drinks a lot of beer, and it's hard to keep him in line."

I said, "Well, I'll take him," and that's how Don and I became friends.

I picked the phone up and asked him, "Do you want a job?" He couldn't get over to Reno fast enough. That was a good deal, you know, getting out of there and getting a fair salary. I had a lot of fun with him, and he was an excellent attorney. He's a good speaker, and he didn't have to spend all day reading a book to figure out what the law was because he was just bright in that area. So he came to work for me, and that's how we became friends and stayed together. He worked hard. He was out a lot of nights, but he'd show up on time the next day, even if he stayed at Incline Village or wherever he happened to be that night. [laughter]

Well, he wasn't quite like Alan Bible—a little different. But he was very popular, and he could get a lot of business. He brought business to the office because he was a well thought of guy—good-looking and dressed well.

When I was alone practicing law for a short time, I had enough business, but it's no *fun*. You can only do so much by yourself, and it also gets old and boring.

By that time, we'd moved to South Virginia, right across the street from that bar, the Rumpus Room. We'd go different places for lunch. There was this eating place right across from our office, and then down three blocks was the Monarch. We used to go down there and eat a lot and also go to the Little Waldorf or the Big Waldorf on South Virginia Street.

We had a rule. I got it from Senator Bible when I started with him, and I kept it, and there will be no drinking before five o'clock at night. So you couldn't have a beer for lunch or *anything* with liquor in it, and we kept to that, because, you know, that eliminates your brain when you start drinking whiskey but lots of times we'd close on Friday afternoon.

The Caranos had that one place on the corner, but it was just a small, little place. I think it was a little restaurant and a bar. There was a bakery there, too. They were the next store down. I never did know how it was divided, but it was in the family some way, and Don just kept buying more and more to expand, and they've been very successful.

Everybody—*practically* everybody—in practicing law in those days did divorce work. It was such a simple thing. The way it worked was like this: if you had some lawyer in New York, or name any town east of Nevada, they would call and tell you they want you to get them a divorce for Bill Smith and his wife, Betty, and, "Bill will be out there to see you, and we've got most of the paperwork done here." So Bill would come in, and Lucille would find him a place to live for his six weeks, and that's all he had to stay. He'd come in, and he'd fill out the papers, when they were married, and do they have any children, and what's this, and what's that. Then he'd leave the office and his six weeks ends on the second of something. So we'd tell him, "Come back on the second early in the morning or the afternoon of the fifth, and be ready to go to court. Wear a necktie." So we'd walk across the street and get him his divorce.



Bob with Don Carano

We had different places for where our clients would stay because it depended on what they wanted. We had lists of places. We had a lady out somewhere that had some kind of a big house built into apartments so just a lot of them went there. The price was right, and she was a nice lady and clean. There was the Riverside Hotel. A lot of clients wanted to stay there because people had heard of the Riverside Hotel. It even got to the point where you had to stay forty-three days in Nevada. It never did say *full* days, so that part was simple. But I had a client come to me and ask me if he could get a credit for a day if he flew over in an airplane, and I couldn't quite agree to that. He's got to at least get his foot on the ground.

I don't know if I'd do it again or not—to become a lawyer. Well, if I didn't stay in the Air Force, I had to do something! I don't know what I would have done. I would have done something.

There were a lot of available things in those days, or I could have got a job at a lot of places, or done a lot of things. Probably, if I'd have gone into some kind of business, I'd have been better off. I don't know what. I wouldn't want to be in the bar business, because I couldn't handle it. I can't control that stuff.

There are things about being an attorney that I didn't like—just the way it's operated—I have to see you at one o'clock, and at three o'clock in comes Smitty, and at four o'clock some girl will come in, and her husband beat her up—I didn't like all that stuff. But to get into the more complicated stuff, and if I haven't got the brains, I'd have to get some lawyers that have mathematical minds. It's all right, but I don't know if I'd do it again. Like my brother Joe, he went to law school, and he was no more going to practice law than he could fly. He went into a partnership down in Vegas. Yes, that was a joke! You ought to



Harold Tiller and Bob signing bonds for the Incline Village General Improvement District

hear Ralph tell the stories—they're funny—and he thought the world of Joe. He did! They were good partners, but Joe was not a practicing lawyer. He had the mind—I don't mean that—he was smarter than a son-of-a-bitch. He was a mathematical genius, I think.

Oh, the fun things are just doing different things that I was allowed to do because I am a lawyer, and I did meet a lot of great people in different positions. There's a type of lawyer that is good at what he does and enjoys it, but I'm not a person that's going to sit in a library for two or three hours a day. I found that out. I don't know, to me, it's kind of boring. When a person does these things like practicing law, they don't know what it's going to be like till they do it, and then sometimes it's too late.

I'm a people person, and I love people and get along good with people. Maybe I should have run for something. At one time I think I had a good chance to do something like that, but I didn't, or I didn't want to, or I wasn't smart enough, or something.

There were several chances I could have run for something. One of them was for the Attorney General. A lot of people asked me to do that after I had worked there for Bible, but I didn't want to do that. So old Bill Mathews, he was about ninety [laughter], who had been in that office forever and appointed by the governor as Chief Deputy Attorney General in 1931, ran for Attorney General in 1950 and he did good. He was all right. I know I could have won but, you know, from there I could've gone somewhere if

I wanted to, but I didn't. I suppose if I had it to do over, I'd probably do the same thing.

There was a gambler from California named Ernie Primm. He was a client of mine at the beginning of the 1950s. I helped him establish a place on the west side of Virginia Street. He was not a resident of Nevada at the time. He was a card representative, as such, in southern California, where he had a number of areas where they played cards for money all the time, and he was involved in that. It was legal and allowed and very popular. He came up to Reno and purchased some property. He hired us to help him get started in Reno, and Alan and I were the most involved, and I had friends in city hall—I had friends like Bruce Roberts and Francovich and those type of people. They knew Ernie Primm, and Alan Bible was known because of his background. We went to work on it. We finally got the city council to come around. And, eventually he got a gambling place on the west side of Virginia Street. He was the first operator on the western side.

He was reasonably easy to work with. He was quick-minded, and he'd say, "Go do this, or go do that," and sometimes you just couldn't do that. You had to go through the city council, or you had to do various things before you could do what he *wanted*, but he didn't care about that. He just wanted it done now, but he was very nice about it. He was a good client, because he paid well. He paid without any hesitation. The lawyers that we used to represent him were all good and helped to get him to where he was. They all liked him. They all met him. There wasn't anything dishonest about any of it. He was one of the big-time operators, and he was quick.

One time I recall that Ernie told us, Don Carano and me, to go see his new show of some girl dancers and singers. There were four or five or them. It was now on the west side of his club and with a new stage. It was very attractive. Don and I went on the front row to watch this, and after about the first fifteen minutes Ernie waltzed

in and stood right in the middle of the stage and said, "Get them out of here." We didn't know what we were supposed to do, so we didn't do anything, and he continued and said he'd like these girls to leave. They did, and they closed the show.

He didn't like them, and that's all he would tell us, "I don't like them." There wasn't anything you could do. You couldn't argue with him because it was his place. He was paying for them, and he had a right to throw them out, as far as the lawyers are concerned, but that ended them, and he got somebody else to take their job of singing and dancing.

If he was your friend or client, he treated you extra especially well. In those days I was kind of politically active, and when I needed money for a friend that was running for office, all I had to do was ask Ernie Primm. Normally he would say, "How much?" and whatever I asked him, if I was within reason, that's what he'd give me, and I'd give that to my friend. And he did that for lots and lots of people. I'll never have any idea how much money he spent—gave away. He was always extra good to the city council people, because he was doing business within the city, but it was all honorable. In those days we didn't have to keep track of the money that they gave for campaigns, and nobody ever asked us how much. If I wanted to give somebody a hundred-dollar bill for running for office or something of that or more, I just did it. I didn't have to declare it and the candidate didn't have to declare it so we never said anything to anybody. Ernie Primm gave money to Mike O'Callaghan.

Ernie Primm had a comment about Mike O'Callaghan. He thought he ought to improve his teeth. He didn't like the way his teeth looked, and didn't think that looked good for a new governor. He just told him to go get it fixed, and he'd pay for it, but Mr. O'Callaghan didn't want to do that. It was never mentioned again.

Charlie Mapes was reasonably generous during election time, but he gave everybody,

practically—running on either side or both sides—the same amount of money. If it was a hundred dollars, he gave them *each* a hundred. So he didn't have any specific friends that I know of, but he was very generous during election time.

I didn't do much business with Bill Harrah at that time, if any. I didn't collect any money from him that I recall, but I'm certain he gave it away if somebody asked him. He was generous, and he was a good friend of everybody.

I knew Mead Dixon very well and he'd get money *from* Bill Harrah, because he was his lawyer, and gave it to certain candidates. I didn't know who. It wasn't any of my business, but Bill was very generous, and his lawyer was a good one. First-class lawyer, very popular, and not only with people, but with the Bar Association.

During my life I've been very involved in politics, especially with the Democratic Party. All the elections that I have worked on have been reasonably interesting and lots of fun and lots of hard work. Most of what we did was honorable, but it required, sometimes, making some different type of moves in different parts of the state, if you know what I mean. [laughter]

I was Mike O'Callaghan's man although I was never formally his campaign manager, and he was a good candidate. I got to know him personally, and I was one of the people that talked him into running for governor. He was absolutely unbelievable in the way that he did it because he would go to the small towns, walk the streets, and talk to the people. Everybody was on a first name basis with him. It wasn't Mr. O'Callaghan—it was Mike—and he was that way, naturally. He was popular when he went through all these towns so he got a lot more votes than his opponent because he went out where the little people were, rather than downtown Las Vegas or downtown Reno. At the end, he picked those votes up and

was just unbelievably popular. You couldn't beat him in those days, and he turned out to be an excellent governor. He was popular whether a voter was a Republican or a Democrat, and nobody seemed to make any difference with him. He treated them all alike, and they all thought he was a wonderful governor.

Lincoln Fitzgerald was a neighbor of my father's on Mark Twain Avenue, and he was also part owner of the Nevada Club on Virginia Street. In November of 1949, Lincoln Fitzgerald was shot in his garage. It was very late in the evening. He was in his garage that faced the west, which put him at the back of his house in the alley. He was shot by somebody that they've never located, never arrested or never found. Hit him right in the back and knocked him face down. My father and mother were in bed next door, and my dad jumped out of bed and threw something on top of himself for clothes. He was the editor at the time for the *Nevada State Journal* newspaper, and he ran over to the garage, saw Fitz, and called the paper so they would get the story, prior to calling the doctor. My mother never let him live that one down, but they did call the police, too, and an ambulance came. They only hit him once, but two shots were fired, and eventually after a great period of time, he recovered, which surprised everybody, but they never did find out who it was or why or anything in connection with the shooting. At that time I had just started working for Alan Bible who was Attorney General.

Fitzgerald came here out of Michigan to gamble, and that was what he was doing in downtown Reno. He owned that part of that gambling establishment, and a guy named Sullivan was his partner. The state of Michigan was trying to extradite them, and the state of Nevada hadn't accused him of anything here, but they were getting ready to send him back. A lawyer in Reno took him to Ely where they were granted a writ of habeas corpus. Judge Watson of White Pine County granted relief for Sullivan and Fitzgerald



Governor Mike O'Callaghan and Bob at the University of Nevada's Governor's Dinner

from extradition, but when it was appealed to the federal courts, they had to go to Michigan and pay some fines, but that was all. So they came back to Reno and went back to work in their establishment downtown, and that's where Fitzgerald was till he passed away.

He was a good man in a lot of ways, as far as we're concerned. When Mike O'Callaghan ran for governor, I took him down there and introduced him to Fitzgerald. So that's how Mike got to know him, and Fitz was a good citizen all the time he was in Nevada.

Mike would treat the poor, the middle-aged, and the young people equally. They could come into his quarters down there in Carson City at the mansion, and everybody was invited. His wife, Caroline, was a wonderful lady, and she just went

right along with whatever he did. He just turned out to be a person who was naturally popular just because he was who he was, and didn't say, "I'm the governor," or, "I'm this. I'm that." He was just Mike O'Callaghan to everybody, and he could've been elected every time he ran—if he could run more than twice. He was just that good.

My job was pretty easy—I had such an easy person to sell because everybody loved him—that's true. All I had to do was get a crowd together and let him speak. He was a natural speaker, and he didn't practice because he didn't even know what he was going to say till he stood up in front of the people and started chatting.

We had a big party out in Idlewild Park. One of his legs was wooden, but he stood up there all afternoon, and I know there was a time he

probably would have excused himself if he'd had a chance—like use a bathroom. He sat up there for five hours at the California Building courtyard and talked to everybody, and whoever they were would come by and chat with him, and he'd make a speech now and then. I think that elected him more than anything because they got to know him and knew what a wonderful common, everyday person he was.

Senator Bible's style was different. You had to elect Senator Bible. He was more of an opposite of O'Callaghan. He was more sophisticated than Mike O'Callaghan was. He would move around the crowd, and he'd shake hands with everybody, but he wasn't as loose. He wasn't relaxed as much as Mike was. So he'd go to the places, and he was a wonderful speaker—speaking before a crowd—and as far as being with people that much, he wasn't quite as good as O'Callaghan, but he was elected during a time when Nevada needed somebody, and he was very capable. One of his mentors was Pat McCarran and that helped him, plus he had a lot of friends. He'd been the Attorney General of Nevada for a couple of seasons, and he was needed. The state needed a man like him, and he did a good job just the way he was. He went to the United States Senate and did a great job. We all got together, all the Democrats, and said, "We're going to win," and we won. Bible was a very talented man and a great Attorney General. When I worked for him I tried a lot of his cases, but the real tough, rough cases that he thought were unbelievably tough, he would always get involved in himself if he could, if he wasn't somewhere else in the state or out of the state. He was just a solid citizen, born in Lovelock and raised in Fallon, came up the hard way, went to law school under Pat McCarran's patronage in Washington, D.C., but before that at the University of Nevada. Bible was a pretty good candidate himself once he got out there, and he was *really*, really popular

in the small towns like Hawthorne, Elko, and Ely.

When Pat McCarran ran for Senate, he just got the right people to work for him and told them what to do. He was tough. He didn't use the word "darn" very often; I can assure you of that. He worked hard, and he knew what he wanted them to do, and where he wanted them to be. He pretty well organized the campaigns himself. One of the "McCarran boys" was my brother Joe, who spent a lot of time in the state of Nevada in various towns and cities working for the Senator.

McCarran never told us he wanted us to work for him—he just knew we would. If he'd done a favor for someone, he'd remember that they got that favor and that they'd return it, but he had a lot of close friends, too. My dad was an extremely close friend of his, and since he was in the newspaper business, he could spread a lot of knowledge about McCarran, and when the voters did get to know about him, he was naturally popular with them. They liked to talk to him, and he was ready to sit down and talk to anybody. Pat McCarran was just a good, solid, man.

My brother knew him personally before I did, and when he was captured on Wake Island, Pat McCarran tried to get him out of the prison. But I did everything I could for McCarran for a lot of reasons. I admired him, and he was a good friend of our family, and so we worked hard for him when he ran. From then on after he was elected, getting people together for him was simple. All we had to do was say, "Pat McCarran's coming in town, and he'd like people to be there," and they'd let the schools out sometimes and things like that, but that's after he was elected.

The first years were tough. People had to go out and pound the streets to get him well-known, but he was a hard worker himself. He had no problem pounding *anything* to get a vote, and he got them. Pat McCarran was just a type of person



From left to right: Mary Jean McDonald, Senator Pat McCarran, Bob, and Joe Jr., ca. 1953.

who was just as interested in helping the lower people, or the people that didn't have as much money, as the people with money. He was good with everybody.

If a person wanted to contact Pat McCarran, Alan Bible, or any of the senators, the normal procedure was just call their office here in Reno at the post office or federal building—being in a small state, we knew who she or he was, a public relations person—and say, “I want to talk to the senator. This is Bob McDonald, and I'd like to talk to the senator. Can you get him?” And they'd say, “Sure.” They'd get him. They'd do that with everybody. Didn't make any difference who you were or what you wanted. They normally wouldn't even ask you what you wanted. A person would just say, “I've got to talk to the senator. I've got to talk to Eva Adams,” She was his top secretary and an extremely talented lady who could and would do almost as much for you, locally, as Senator McCarran.

The kind of things he would intervene for someone was being able to get kids into the Naval Academy or West Point, and if someone wanted

to go to school back East, he could get them into any school they wanted and *would*. There were the tough ones to get into, and he put you right on the list next. He didn't care if they were his cousin or his brother or somebody off the street. He was very square with everybody, and he'd tell them, “I think I can get you in within two weeks or two months or two years,” and he'd do that. A person could set their life in a way that he set it for you.

If a rancher had some water problems or something of that nature, he could call Pat McCarran if he couldn't get any help anywhere else. The rancher would tell him what the problem was, and the senator would get it fixed for him. He was strong enough that even if he was on the wrong side—he could and would fix it. He didn't hurt anybody, but he didn't turn away from anybody either.

Alan Bible did things in a more tactful way. Alan Bible wasn't as strong, and I mean that he wouldn't go forward as fast as Senator McCarran would. Senator McCarran would move from the sidelines, get in the middle, and get it all over with quick. That was his attitude. If he thought a constituent was right, well, he was going to get them what they deserved.

Bible was more tactful in dealing with people, and I think that Alan Bible was a little more gentlemanly than Senator McCarran, but they'd wind up with the same result, normally.

Fred Anderson ran for the United States Senate, and he lost in the primary. My brother was his campaign manager, but they didn't particularly get along. Joe was a little rougher than Dr. Anderson. Anderson was just a wonderful person, a *great* doctor. He was elected to the Board of Regents, but he wasn't rough enough, really, to be a United States senator, I don't think. He was brilliant—brilliant in his head—and he had a great following, but he wasn't the type of person that would fight for a state and give speeches

many, many times a day. He wouldn't do that. Just wasn't built that way! He was a great doctor, a great instructor up at the university, and well known, and just wasn't built for that type of show.

One of the characteristics that makes a good politician is he or she has got to be reasonably educated. It would be abnormal if they came out of high school and ran for the United States Senate. They have got to at least have gone to the university, graduated, and have something they can sell to the people—perhaps have a degree in mining or something along those lines, and then they can get started. Now, if they're popular and they've got a lot of friends, then he or she should put them out on the streets, and just get them pounding doors and cars—*anything* to be with people—all the rest of the time till the election. And it's got to be a big organization, [taps on the table for emphasis] but with little organizations throughout the state. Every little town has to have an organization. Has to have a leader and has to have their friends. In other words, in Elko, the candidate has to have Joe Jones as his leader for that town. Joe gets your group together, and the candidate goes through there and speaks to them and just keeps moving and moving and moving. The more individuals he can talk to, the better chance he has to get elected in a state like Nevada. It's different than a lot of states, but here someone could get to the people, and especially when the state was less populated, where a guy could talk to almost half the people in the state in two days. Like Hawthorne—we could go through that town and go through every bar, buy drinks for everybody, shake hands with everybody and things of that nature. We would even do such things as have Alan Bible go up to a cemetery where somebody that he knew had been buried and maybe put flowers, a wreath, or whatever to let people know that he was visiting his grave, and *seriously*, I mean, it wasn't a joke, but there are things like that can be done in Nevada that can't be done in every other state

because it's a small state. Good state to run for office.

There are all kinds of females, and there are just a lot of ways to get votes from the women. What that means is there are some girls that aren't as nice as other girls, but they vote. We really didn't do anything with them. I mean, it was just a real thrill to the girls if we went down to the whore houses where those places are legal in Nevada. We had a lot of places, and Reno had one of them at one time. We would just go down and shake hands with those girls and tell them who we were, and that our friend was running for office. We'd expect it would help to get their vote, "And if I can help you later, and if I can work anything for you, well, I'll be glad to do it." Things of that nature. He just had to be friends with everybody, but he didn't have to go to bed with them.

I think Bob Cashell would have been an excellent candidate for Governor, and, looking back now, he could have been elected in this election with very little trouble, but we talked about it and figured he and his name hadn't been around enough since his time being Lt. Governor and on the University Board of Regents.

Yes! We should have run him for governor *this time* [2006], and we would have won it, but we made a mistake, and I was probably the guy that made the mistake, but I thought it was that he hadn't been around here long enough, and Las Vegas has grown so much since he was Lt. Governor. But he's got that ability of meeting people—I mean, talking to them. He's a reasonably good speaker, but he's friendly with everybody, and they all like that. I think if we'd have done that, had him run, we'd have gotten him elected easy. But at the time, he and I talked about it quite often and just didn't think he'd been around enough lately. It was kind of a mistake we made, and he made, and all his friends made, too, probably. None of them thought this was his time, but it was, looking back. He's a *great*



Bob Casbell, Mike O'Callaghan, and Bob on a fishing trip.

mayor. Great mayor! They won't get ten votes against him in this next election, probably. They'll get some votes, but you'll never know how many, they'll be so little. Yes, he's very popular, and he's very talented, and he knows when to say it, whatever it might be. He's good.

The Reno Air Races started in 1964. The first Reno Air Races was a gathering of some smaller airplanes out in Spanish Springs Valley. It was a local rancher that had that air strip at Sky Ranch, and we used to use it once in a while. We'd go to Battle Mountain for something or in that area and maybe around Elko. They didn't charge us anything, but they had places to tie planes down, maybe for four or five airplanes—something along that line. Then we were allowed to use it for the Air Races.

Pilots that had these small airplanes would go out there and fly and do different sort of acts, if you want to call them acts, with the airplane. More people started coming to watch them so

we got some bleachers to sit on. It was two years where we had the Reno Air Races out in Spanish Springs and then in 1966 we moved to Stead.

Bud Bradley, Roy Powers, Jud Allen and, of course, Bill Stead, were the main players as well as lots of other pilots and businessmen that got involved in starting the Air Races, and Pat Brady, Jim Archer and myself got involved with these guys. It was easy to get people that were interested because it's a sport, and it's very interesting to airplane buffs. It draws a lot of people that like to watch that type of thing. So it got bigger every year, and we have lots of airplanes now, and it's really been very successful.

The racing is just one part of it. I mean, the single-engine airplanes go round and round and round an area that's within probably five miles in a circle racing. They do so many cycles, and then at the end of that, the winner would get a cup or a prize, and then there are all types of things you can buy in the area. There are vendors that sell

popsicles or gum or whatever you want—like sandwiches. There is very little drinking, but there's a lot of beer. Everybody drinks beer if they want it. It's normally warm weather, and beer fits in well.

There's plenty of room to sit—bleachers all up and down. Then the big-shot people—I never did sit there—could sit near the edge of the runway and there were seats up inside of the tents, and the people who were involved in racing and organizing would go in there a lot, but nobody was ever in any danger and we've never lost any spectators while I was involved because of the error that pilot made. It was all good. It's gotten so that it draws thousands of people, and it's long and hard to get out there in automobiles from Reno because so many people are coming, and they have to drive in there and find a parking place. Now parking attendants give them help, and there's a back way to go now. We turn off the highway sooner than going way out to where Stead is. The Reno National Air Races are very popular now.

I usually had something to say or talk before those things started and make sure everybody was doing what they were supposed to do. We had lots of food that we gave away to everybody. They'd come by the main office and get a hamburger or whatever they wanted to eat, or a beer, and Coca-Colas.

We just treated everybody nice, everybody equal, and I think that's what made it kind of popular more than the average type of show. It was just attractive to people that liked airplanes and liked to watch them. There weren't that many spectators that flew them, but they enjoyed watching them—enjoyed the races. It was exciting—very exciting, and they'd go right over the people once a day, and every race right in front of you, and maybe over your head. Then they'd go around, and they'd get almost out of sight way down east of the airport there, and then here they all come again. Pretty low, they'd fly

them. I can't recall whether we had a certain height they could fly, but they didn't get down low where they're going to hurt any people. They'd be maybe as low as a hundred feet, two hundred feet, but normally, I think they had to stay up, I don't know, twenty yards or something. Pretty high for racing.

It did a lot—and still does—for bringing people into Reno. That's a good excuse to come here. They get tickets from the various places here, or casinos give the tickets to their customers, so it helped everybody. It just still is a big, exciting, attractive event.

There were a lot of famous pilots that came to the Air Races. What I mean is that there were a lot of pilots that fought in the war—and instructors and all kinds of people that were the real heroes—but they weren't heroes to me during the war, and I didn't particularly know any of them, unless they were already my friends from Reno, Carson, or Las Vegas.

I never met Chuck Yeager—there weren't names like that at the races at first. During the war I had my own thing to do, and Chuck Yeager didn't mean anything to me any more than I meant anything to him, because I was doing my job, and he was doing his. I don't know if I was ever even on the same island with him, but he was a wonderful person and a wonderful pilot. He did great.

I'd see somebody I'd knew in the Air Corps, either that I was flying with or worked with somewhere during the war. I'd meet a lot of them at the Air Races. I'd run into them quite often. They'd come up for it. Bay Area people would come often. Very popular there—still is, evidently. I can't remember any trouble we ever had. We'd allow them up in the north end of the airport there.

We had the planes spread out so that a person could go up and stand up and get in them and look them over. There'd be somebody there to answer questions for you if you had any. You could get them all answered. It's amazing how

many people there are that have never actually been close to a parked airplane, other than maybe a commercial one when they're going on a trip, but to see these little airplanes—they were excited—it's very attractive to a certain type of person that likes that, and they're going to go no matter what happens, and bring their families, and the kids love it.

Nevada is a good place to fly planes because of the weather. It was a lot better back in the 1940s when it wasn't crowded. There weren't any airplanes flying around—just that one airport. It was better then, but a pilot can still go up and fly around Lake Tahoe. Then between Reno and Vegas, there is Tonopah and various other places to land. It's a good place to learn to fly because there's everything—mountains, lakes, and desert.

After the war, I had this one plane, and we did fly it around a lot. We'd go to Elko and Tonopah. I don't think we ever went to Las Vegas. It was just myself and friends, and I remember I had Tim, one of my sons, up flying one time, and it was useful to have him and a lot of fun to be with, and he helped me look around. I came into Lovelock one time with Tim, and we're crossing a highway to get to the airport, which is very small, and all of a sudden I looked up, and he yelled or something, and we were coming right into a Sierra Pacific power line. Fortunately, I pushed down under it instead of going over the top. We went in and landed, but it was very stupid on my part. If Tim hadn't have been with me, and I'd have been alone, and it would have been probably the end of the rope.

Jack Carpenter was on the campaign trail with Bible, and I was flying them around. Oh, they were scared. Yes, I flew them. [laughter] Landed on a highway two or three times out of Lovelock and various places. [laughter] They wanted to go get votes, and that was the main reason I was flying them around, and then just giving them a thrill ride. We'd just go for an airplane ride, but Alan was always running for something, or getting

ready to run, and we'd take him so he could get out and shake hands with everybody. I didn't necessarily go on the highway, but we were flying over and following close to it. Number one, you could always land if you had a failure. And number two, if you were going to Lovelock, it was the best way to just fly in that direction.

I had a client who ran the dice for the Stateline Club and that was one of the bigger ones. I went up to Tahoe one weekend and went down to see him in Stateline, and he had crap games all around. He was in the middle, of course. I said, "How's it going?"

He said, "Oh"

I walked right into the pit where he was. He wasn't supposed to let me in, but he didn't care. He took me to the back room, and he said, "I want to show you something." He started dumping dice out of his arms. He had dice everywhere you could see! [laughter] And he was winning everything. He knew how to use those dice! He did something with his arms so he could dump them out of his sleeves. He was good. He went to Europe for a little while after that to do some gambling. Then he returned to Nevada and went back to Lake Tahoe. He was a real likeable guy, but he was as dishonest as you could get. That's why they paid him. They had a lot of those people around the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe in those days on both sides of the highway. A lot of them were dishonest—quick. *Things were a little shady and fast up there.* They were pretty quick with the dice and the cards. The person who was out there that gambled for fun and enjoyed it was not getting an even break, whether it was cards or just the dice. The employees were cheating the customer. They even used mirrors. At the Twenty-One Club the dealer would use mirrors! He or she would have a partner that would go behind the customer. The partner would use the mirror to reveal to the dealer what cards the players had. The dealer would see it and play accordingly. The partner was really working for

the house, but he looked like a customer. They had every trick in the world. The house was winning. There were players that were cheating in there as well. Everybody was kind of cheating on both sides of the table. It was pretty tough to win any money, unless you were crooked. And I didn't play it much, because I wasn't supposed to. We were lawyers, and some of those joints were our clients—a lot of them. And you couldn't stop them from cheating. I mean, that's their business. Oh, I've had a lot of shady clients. [laughter] Everybody has, or just I have anyway. They were just part of practicing law in Nevada.

There was the one place where we did all our gambling and betting—The Reno Turf Club—on the next block down from Virginia Street, Center Street, and it was right on the railroad tracks. That was pretty much where we bet all our football games. We hung out there a lot and bet on ball games and drank beer mostly. We'd double park and try to get by with that, and a cop would come along sometimes. They hardly ever came in, but they'd give you a ticket. You know, I'd park right in the middle of the street and run in to make a bet and that's about the time the police would drive by and stop and write a ticket.



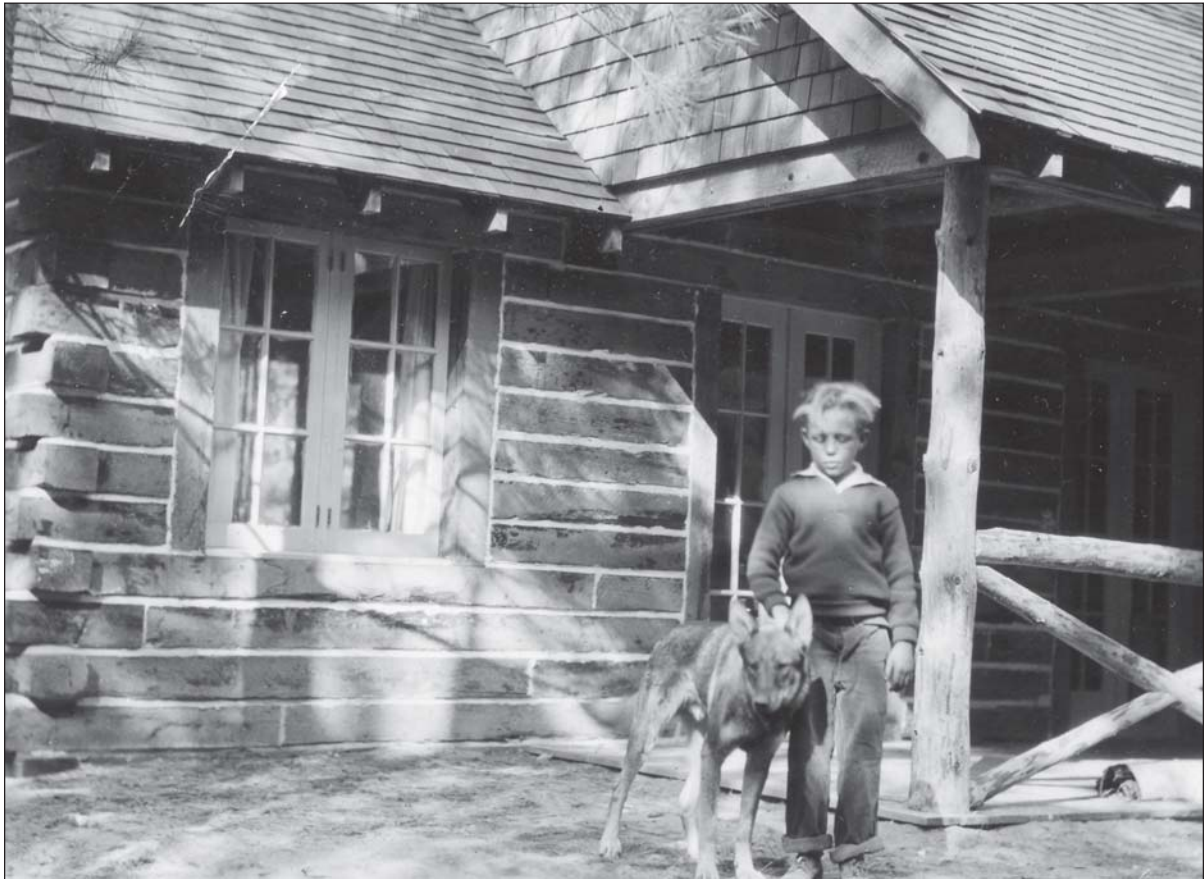
A gathering of of the Lewis family in Sparks, Nevada. Bob as a older boy can be seen in the middle, standing to the left of Grandma Lewis and Grandpa Lewis.



Joe McDonald Sr. gardening.



Charles Lindbergh appeared with city officials during his visit to Reno on September 19, 1927. Joe Jr. is on the far right. Courtesy of the Nevada Historical Society.



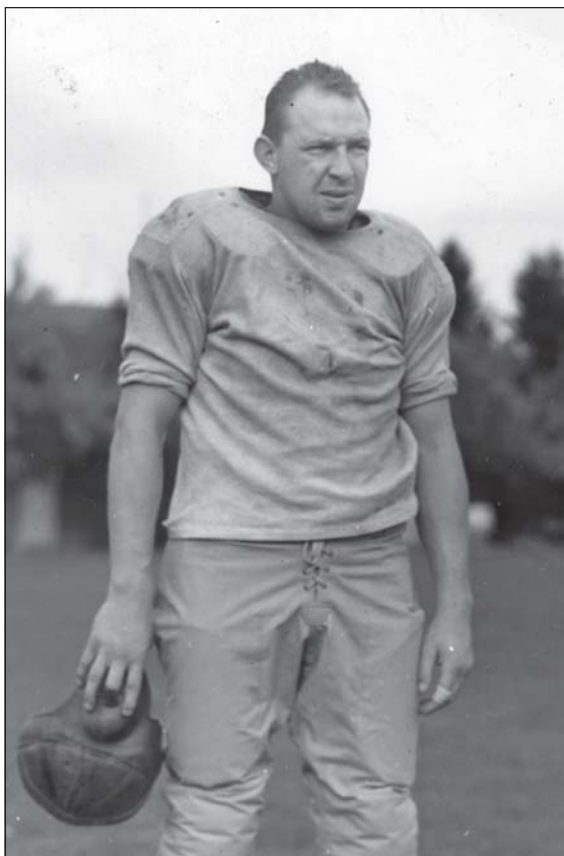
King as a puppy and Bob in front of the McDonald's cabin at Zephyr Cove.



The Santa Clara boys in front of the breakers at Santa Cruz



Leola McDonald and Gloria McDonald, ca. 1943.



Joe Jr. in his University of Nevada football uniform.



Betty Jean and Al Conton, December 17, 1965.



Bob and fellow pilots awaiting departure for the Aleutians. Left to right, back row: Harley Talks, Frank Pope, James Stevens, Dave Middleton. Front row: Dick Gardner, Bob McDonald, Bob Neel, Arthur Husted.



The pilot's wives, left to right: Marge Millard, Shirley Krenytzky, Fran Pope, and Gloria McDonald.



Bob holding a hand-made spear and a Pink Salmon.



A stateside dinner before the 54th left for the Aleutians. Left to right: Joe McDonald Sr., Bob McDonald, Leola McDonald, Arthur Hustead, Sam Palmer, Howard Millard, Dave Middleton, Mrs. Curtain, Captain T.W. Jackson, and Jim Curtain.



An Air Corps publicity shot. Bob can be seen on the far left as Captain Griffin addresses the group.



Bob and Gloria attending President John F. Kennedy's inauguration.



Jack Carpenter, Bob, and John Uhalde



Bob with Don Baldwin



Jack Carpenter, Bob, and Spike Wilson on a successful chukar hunting trip

DON CARANO

Don Carano recalls meeting Bob McDonald for the first time at a University of San Francisco alumni luncheon. Don and Bob had adventures together when they worked on 300 South Virginia Street, across the street from the Rumpus Room. Don is “of counsel” to the McDonald Carano Wilson LLP law firm and spends most of his time at his vineyard, Ferrari-Carano Winery. He also remains an active owner of the Eldorado Hotel Casino Reno and the Silver Legacy Resort Casino.

I was born at Saint Mary’s Hospital on October 17, 1931, in Reno, Nevada. My father’s family, the Carano side, came from Genoa, Italy, in 1897 and located in Reno, Nevada. My mother was half Irish and half Italian. Her father also came from Genoa, Italy, but her mother came from Chicago, Illinois.

I went to Reno High School and graduated in 1949. I went to the University of San Francisco undergraduate school and graduated in 1954, went in the service for two years—ROTC, a commission—and then went back to the University of San Francisco for law school in 1956 and graduated in 1959. I passed the Nevada Bar in the spring of 1960.

My first job after I got out of law school was working for Russ McDonald at the Statute

Revision Commission in Carson City where the Legislative Counsel is located, and I also had a small private practice in Reno, but it was kind of a half-way practice. [laughter] Worked like a car in the backyard, right?

I met Bob McDonald, I would say, in 1962. I actually met him at a USF luncheon. The law school at USF was sponsoring a luncheon at the Riverside Hotel in Reno, Nevada, and I happened to sit next to Bob. He asked me what I was doing, and I explained. Bob told me at that time they had just obtained a big client, Crystal Bay Development Company, the developer of Incline Village, and they were looking for another attorney in the office. At that time, there were really just two lawyers in the office, Bob and Dyer Jensen, because, of course, Alan Bible was the United States Senator and in Washington D.C. Bible, McDonald, and Jensen was the name of the firm, and I just joined the firm shortly thereafter in 1962, and worked for Bob for a period of a year, and then he made me a full partner the following year. So it has been a very great relationship with McDonald since that time.

As a local boy, I brought some business in the office, Italians especially, but I primarily worked with the Crystal Bay Development



Don Carano and Bob

Company, though I had others. I was to take care of the contractual situations of Crystal Bay because it was their start of Incline Village prior to the time that there were any roads built, anything else built, golf courses, et cetera. It was right at the development stage. Of course, as a young lawyer, I was thrown into large contracts, contractures, Planning Commission work, and county commissioner work, which was unbelievable, because normally, you'd be working for another lawyer, and he'd be a supervisor, but I was kind of on my own.

My specialty for the first ten years of my practice was primarily real property, working with Incline Village and other properties. In the second ten years of my practice, I got into the gaming aspect, representing major gaming clients in the northern part of the state and the state as a whole.

I had virtually a monopoly at North Tahoe, representing Crystal Bay Development Company with Bob, and we also represented the North Shore Club, and Crystal Bay Club. We formed two improvement districts up there, the Incline Village General Improvement District, IVGID, as well as the improvement district of Stateline. Here in Reno we represented Harolds Club, and, of course, Bob represented Ernie Primm in all those years. I did a lot of work with Bob and Primm, and the Primadonna.

Spike [Thomas R.C. Wilson] came in probably two or three years after that, around 1964. I think Leo came on in 1969 or 1970.

What was a typical day working with Bob McDonald on 300 South Virginia across from the Rumpus Room? Yes, the Rumpus Room was five o'clock headquarters. I was with Bob McDonald for a long period of time. He's a very special and creative guy, and he was a business-getter in the firm. Bob always kids that he was just left working in the law library, and that's not true. He got the clients, and he had a very special knack for that.

People had a lot of confidence in Bob, and Bob was a man of his word. I mean, he may not write briefs very often, but he's a person that can certainly analyze a situation and determine what's right or wrong. I take the strong points of Bob. Bob, number one, feels that as a lawyer, he has an obligation to the community and people in the community. Some people can't afford legal services, and it was always Bob's position, if they can't afford to pay him, we still have the obligation to represent them. And that's within reason, of course. So it was one of those things that came through the office. Of course, when I was the only person in the office and Bob would have all these pro bono cases without compensation, being the good guy he is, he would say to me, "Well Don, you've got to take care of these guys." Of course, I was very happy to see Leo Bergin, especially, come on board, because Leo then took them. [laughter] I said, "Here, Leo, you get this job." But that's special; that shows what kind of a guy Bob was; he always felt that regardless of whether a person could pay or not that people would have the right to have some legal representation, and if they couldn't afford to pay it, then it was our obligation to provide it. And we did. And a lot of them could not afford to pay. Of course, a lot of these people he met in the bar the night before, things of that nature. [laughter] Some nights we both did; it was not just him. We did our fair share of drinking in those days. He'd always come in and say, "Don,

come in my office. So and so—they've got a little bit of a problem." I knew damn well they couldn't afford my hourly rate. [laughter] But after a while, there wasn't any question. OK, we did it! Looking back on it, I think that's very special that we did that. I don't know how much the law office does of this anymore, but I know that when Bob was there, we did more than our fair share. I look back on it as a character trait of Bob McDonald. Bob McDonald, of course, is a Democrat. He's Catholic, and he's Irish. I don't know which one comes first. I always thought if Jesus Christ was a Republican, it would be a difficult decision for Bob to make as to who he'd follow, join with, because he's truly a staunch Democrat, and, of course, his faith is the Catholic religion.

The Irish never forget Saint Patrick's Day; those were always big days. [laughter] No, Columbus Day wasn't celebrated in our office. [laughter] We never knew about Columbus Day. No, it was Saint Patrick's Day. That wasn't a one-day celebration; it was about a week celebration.

Bob has these traits—he's uncanny on how he can appraise and analyze people, you know, whether they're good people or bad people, what their problem is, and so forth. He really has an uncanny ability about him that way. I'll give you one example of that. It was Mike O'Callaghan who became governor, and prior to that time he was a schoolteacher in Henderson. Then I think he left teaching school, and he was working for a federal agency. But Lieutenant Governor Fike, who was Lieutenant Governor under Laxalt, and Laxalt would not be re-running, was virtually a shoe-in.

Bob told me, "I got a man that you'll like." Of course, O'Callaghan was Irish; he was Catholic; he was a Democrat, OK? So going in, he had three things going for him. [laughter]

I said, "Really? How can you beat Fike? He's got all the money, he's got the Republicans, he's got Laxalt behind him," and so forth and so on.

"Wait, this guy is a hell of a guy!" And he analyzed O'Callaghan. He turned out to be a great governor, by the way. But still he had an uphill

race. He was not known in the state. McDonald worked very hard, and Jack Carpenter worked very hard to get money for O'Callaghan by pounding the state for money. But really, there was a crowning blow in that situation because even up until about two weeks before the election, Fike was ahead in the election and was supposed to win. Then McDonald came in the office and said, "You won't believe this."

I said, "What's that?"

He said, "Get this." Fike was on a Colorado River commission. Of course, being on a Colorado River commission, he had the ability to do some things at some types of places which may not be appropriate, and McDonald dug it up. [laughter] He says, "Look at this!"

I said, "Really? Is that true?"

He said, "Yes, it's true."

I said, "What are you going to do with it?"

"Watch." [laughter]

So I don't know, somehow it got in the paper, on TV [laughter] and on the radio. It originally appeared in a Jack Anderson column. And, of course, guess what? Fike lost, and O'Callaghan won! He became a two-term governor, and did a great job as governor. Bob always had a great relationship with O'Callaghan. O'Callaghan had one wooden leg, as a result of the Korean War, and he used to call him Peg Leg. [laughter]

Bob McDonald could do things that if I did them, I'd be in jail. [laughter] A cat has nine lives. I think Bob had ten, and he could get away with things, but he was a character—a very good character. A man of good character, and people appreciated that. He had friends from the president of the bank to the guy sweeping the streets. That's the kind of an individual he was.

Well, he's a very bright guy. He may not write briefs—I mean, he probably could write briefs very well, too. He'll tell you *how* to write a brief, what to put in the brief. He's not going to sit down and write it himself—but he's a very bright guy. He obviously made the firm; he's a founder of the firm. Actually, Alan Bible and he founded the firm; then Bob took it over, and he grew the

firm. He's a very generous guy, too. I became a full partner after a period of a year. He said, "You'll be a full partner."

I said, "What does that cost me?"

He said, "Nothing!"

I said, "Really? That's very special." He did that with everyone. Not only with me, but Leo, Spike, and Frankovich down the road. I don't know if they still do that in the law office or not.

I guess the best thing about practicing law with Bob McDonald, was that it was fun. It wasn't stuffy. What's the day going to bring? It was always exciting. He's a very competitive guy and likes challenges, and so nothing was beyond him to take on a challenge. In fact, the bigger the challenge, the better he liked it.

Incline was a big example of that. There were a lot of people at Lake Tahoe who were opposed to Incline Village, and, of course, I don't think we ever won a case in the Planning Commission, but we had appealed and won with the county commissioners. So Bob's a great guy in taking on

a challenge, and at the same time, knowing how to administer or how to be successful.

The story about Whittell is that he went and got a bottle of scotch—bought two bottles, I think—he drank one himself with Whittell's caretaker. [laughter] Then the caretaker took him down to the house, and Bob knocked on his door and served the papers on Whittell and exercised the option. But how many people would think of that—be creative enough to do that? [laughter] I think the caretaker was probably Irish, also.

We were first on 300 South Virginia Street, then we moved over to 60 Court Street, and on to the new building, which Bob, myself and Spike Wilson built. I guess the most fun was when just Bob, myself, Spike and Leo were partners.

Spike was a little different than Bob and me. He didn't head to the Rumpus Room at five o'clock, especially on Thursday night. We used to have terrible hangovers on Friday. I haven't drank a Scotch in thirty years. [laughter] So,



The secretaries at the 300 South Virginia Street office, ca. 1962.

actually, this is funny that Spike was trying to balance off the situation with Don and Bob, and wanted to get someone like him on his own side to kind of balance the firm. So somehow it was his idea to bring Leo Bergin in. Well, the funny part was that Leo Bergin was no more like Spike than the man in the moon. [laughter] He was on our side. There really weren't sides, but, you know, just the same type of guy that we were from day one, and that was funny. We always kidded him, "Next time, you better get more selective with your positions." [laughter]

Bob's secretary for a long time—her name was Lucille. Her husband was a chiropractor. She was there before I got there, and she was there for years. The secretaries kind of came and went, but they were all there for a while. My secretary was Dorothy for a long time, and Marilyn Oakes was Spike's secretary. And then, Mary Kay replaced Bob's secretary when she retired.

It was a small office. We were four or five people maybe. We didn't increase our size until we moved to 60 Court Street, because we had Eddy LeBaron one time. We had Paul Bible join us at one time, and they both left. So the only two guys who really survived were McDonald and myself. [laughter] We couldn't find people quite like us, but despite our differences, Spike did survive, as well as Leo, and then John Frankovich came into the office.

I had a case with John. John, at that time, was in the civil division at the district attorney's office. Again, I was representing Crystal Bay Development Company arguing over the assessor's valuation on real property, and John was the guy on the other side. I thought a great deal of his ability, and he was fair. It wasn't a case; it was a settlement situation. But anyway, I went back to Bob, and I said, "There's a fellow over there"—because we were looking for people—"I think you ought to talk to." I brought John over, and he talked to him. Of course, Bob knew of John's family. The Frankovich family had been here for many years, also, so Bob knew the family. Of course, John came in the office. The office

has grown and it's entirely different today than it was when Bob and I were there.

I'm not practicing much anymore. Not much at all. [laughter] When Bob and I were practicing, we used to meet every Friday afternoon and see how much money we had, and how much we could split between us. It was a much more casual situation. Bob never asked me how many hours I had for billing, or vice versa. We weren't doing that. The law firm is a business now.

I'm sure the other law firms, like the Vargas firm and the Sawyer firm, were much more business oriented, and they actually required hours and so forth—hours billed, how much you're billing, what are you doing, and so forth.

Bob and I always had the opinion, what could they afford to pay? [laughter] Well, that's not exactly true; we had hourly deals. There are some cases we actually were able to be very successful for a short period of time, and it helped build the client base, but we were fair.

I used to have an Italian client, Louis Benetti, and he was probably about as close with a dollar as you ever want to see. At the end of the year, he'd come up and say, "Here's a check. Fill it out." He didn't ask me what the billing was. He said, "How much do I owe you for the year?" Bob had a lot of those clients that way. Of course, take Ernie Primm. Bob could do no wrong with Ernie Primm, and Bob had a lot of clients like that, another example would be Art Wood. We represented them for everything, we didn't just do their business, but we also did, if needed, a divorce or their will or whatever.

Practicing law with Bob in those days was fun. It really was—I went to the office in the morning and enjoyed going there. I'm not saying these people aren't now, but it's a different story. I mean, when you run a firm with fifty-five people and look at that payroll and the light bill and the secretarial fees and all the expenses that go with it, it's a big business. I'm looking at revenues and expenses, right?

But it was a great experience in my life working with Bob. In fact, I received an award

two weeks ago at USF Law School, and I had to give a little presentation about how much USF meant to me, and I said that one of the things that it meant was that it gave me the opportunity to meet Bob McDonald, and I was a partner with him for forty years.

Ernie Primm dearly loved Bob. Bob could say anything, even anything *wrong*, ask for anything, and there was no question about it. He wouldn't question Bob with anything. Ernie had Gardena Card Clubs in southern California and poker clubs. He came to Reno—this, again, was before my time in the law office—and opened the Primadonna on the west side of Virginia Street. At that time, they had what they called a red-line district, and the red-line district controlled where unrestricted gaming was in downtown. Of course, it was controlled by Harolds Club and Fitzgerald's and a few of those clubs. So Ernie was the first that broke the red-line district by moving across onto the west side of Virginia Street.

Ernie then wanted to go onto the west side of Sierra Street, where the Golden Phoenix was and now condominiums. To make a long story short, we went to the city council. Of course, the city council at that time was pretty well controlled by Fitzgerald from Fitzgerald's Hotel.

He had two or three people on that city council that—I won't go into names—really were able to control where gaming was. [laughter] So Bob said, "Well, let's put together an initiative petition and get the signatures by the people of the city of Reno, and they'll put it on the ballot." So that required two things. Number one is to put together an organization to get the signatures, because you have to get the correct number of signatures of voters—a certain percentage of voters—and then you have to, of course, win the election. But the bottom line was—and Bob saw this—once we got it on the ballot, we would probably win, and if we won, at that time, the city council would have no further jurisdiction over gaming. It took us about four or five months to put together an initiative petition and go out and organize.

Actually, Ernie brought up a guy, a little guy, he was small in stature, a good guy from southern California, who kind of put the organization together, and a group of paid people to go out and get signatures and so forth, and we got the signatures. Then Bob went down to the city council and says, "Here, we're filing the petition. Do you want us to *file* a petition?" [laughter] They said, "No. What do you want?" Because if we'd have filed a petition and went to an election, like I said, that would take away the control of the city council to further restrict gaming unless we went back to another vote of the people. And they didn't want to lose that authority, so that was the end of that ball game. So Bob got Ernie what he wanted on the east side of Sierra Street, and that's when he opened the Primadonna and so forth on that side. At that time it was just on the east side of Sierra Street; it went across the alley.

Primm was very good with us. He actually took us to two inaugurations back in Washington, and going to an inauguration with Ernie was kind of different. He paid ten thousand dollars for these tables at the various balls—Kennedy was one, and Richard Nixon was the other—we'd go into these balls, and Ernie would stay in there about fifteen minutes and leave, so we normally did not have dinner there but ended up at a hamburger stand.

Bob and I would always come down and see his shows at the Primadonna, and, of course, we'd start drinking Scotch about five o'clock, five-thirty. One show we sat through was a striptease show, but it was different. [laughter] They started with their clothes off and put clothes on. Ernie came up to us, and he said, "What do you think of the show?"

We said, "We think they look better with clothes on. Keep the clothes on!" [laughter]

He didn't like that, "What do you mean?"

Those were good times. We used to do our fair share of drinking, so to speak. Of course, every time an election came around, Bob would take Alan Bible to all these various bars and so forth. [laughter] They'd get the votes. He'd always



Bob, Mrs. Primm, and Ernie Primm at President Kennedy's inauguration, January 1961.

tell him, "Alan, they vote. They're very important voters!" [laughter] Well, Alan would come down to the bar there periodically, but so long as he was with people he knew, as opposed to our present governor. [laughter] Alan was careful who he sat down with, but he was just great. Alan Bible was a very special guy, too. Bob and he were complete opposites, but they had a great relationship. He'd walk in, close the door, and say, "OK, McDonald, how much trouble have you gotten me into today?" [laughter] That was his famous opening statement to Bob, "OK, McDonald, what have you done today that has gotten me into trouble?"

The Eldorado is on the west side of Virginia Street. But the red-line district is no longer in existence, and now they have certain other requirements of hotel rooms and rules. The Eldorado was our first property north of the

tracks, and it wasn't easy to finance for that reason. Actually, the property that initially was built was just a hotel with slot machines, and then, of course, half way through it, we decided we wanted a full casino. Originally, a portion of the property was in the family. Fifty feet was in the Carano family; another fifty feet in the Siri family then. When I got out of school, though, I started buying the surrounding properties. So I bought the whole block, and then eventually bought the whole family the whole block. I bought the surrounding property where the California Club and the California Market were. Then they wanted a bar and a bakery and a bar on the corner and a motel on the back. It took a period of years to buy all these. It just didn't happen at once.

I owned a portion because of my father's interest, and then my Uncle Willy and my Aunt Katie Siri. That was basically it. They don't own the Eldorado; they still lease the portion of the ground, and then I own a portion of the other ground. But they had never owned the building. They were in the business initially, but I think I scared them. They wanted out. [laughter] I had the gaming license. They were on a gaming license to begin with. But I think Siri sold first, Yori sold and then Willy sold. They were not used to this business, and it was a little intimidating. [laughter] That would be a good word. Yes, a little fast for them. [laughter] Well, it's a different business. And I never had a gaming background. I wasn't much of a gambler—never a gambler. The only thing I like to play is the horses. But because of my association—the law office represented all these various gaming companies; I've sat on different boards and things of that nature—I became familiar with the business, at least. To this day, Gary and Gene are still the crackerjacks at the business of gaming.

Half way through the construction we decided we would have a full-blown casino, and then it went in different stages. Now, it's the boys' turn.

I love Reno. It's still my home. I was born and raised here. All my family and friends are

here. I did have the good fortune to meet Bob McDonald and spent a period of time practicing law with him. You could never duplicate that again. In this day and age you couldn't, because now the firms are bigger and consolidated and so forth. I know I walk into the law office, and they've got these little cubicles, these little offices, and it's a different thing. But I was very happy and very lucky to have met Bob McDonald and enjoy those years I did. As I said before, he's a man of big character. A lot of character, and I mean good character.

Bob and I were drinking at the El Borracho one night. There was a confrontation with Bob and me between these two other people. We didn't know them, but somehow we walked outside, and a few fists were thrown, and someone broke it up. [laughter] We didn't know who that individual was, and I found out later he was the president at the mortgage company on Court Street. Very nice guy. Later became great friends with him. We all apologized, and that was the end of it. But that was that fight that Leo mentioned.

The other fight I remember was another time in Las Vegas. [laughter] McDonald did like to fight periodically, and he wasn't as good a fighter as his brother Joe was. Joe was a fighter. Anyway, Bob and I were at the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas. Bob Cashell can really tell this story, but it was Bob Cashell, me and Bob. We were in Las Vegas to appear before the Gaming Control Board and Commission the next day. It was for Bob Cashell's first license as a gaming licensee at Boomtown, which at that time was called Bill and Effie's Truck Stop, and we were his attorneys. We were at the bar, and there was this big guy. He was a judge. He was a district court judge in Las Vegas. He and I were talking, and Bob was sitting there. The judge was Hispanic. He was a Mexican, OK? [laughter] He called me a goddamn wop or something like that, and Bob just got mad as hell. [laughter] And, Jesus, the next thing I know—Cashell knows better than I do—Bob was going to take him on. He was about three times the size of Bob! "You can't call my partner a dago! You

can't call him a wop!" and things like that, referring to me. [laughter] Ask Cashell. Cashell broke a bottle! We thought McDonald was really going to have a fight, and Cashell was going to grab a bottle and protect himself or something like that. I said, "Hey, McDonald, don't worry about it. He's a goddamn spic, and I'm a dago. Who cares? OK?" [laughter] And that was the end of that. But he was going to protect my name. And this guy's about three times the size of him. We still laugh about it periodically, Cashell and I do.

Well, his brother Joe was entirely different than Bob—not entirely different. He was a wheeler dealer and a lawyer.

He was very good at real estate, too. Joe was a very smart guy. I used to call him Uncle Joe. I was his lawyer most of the time, because he always was in some kind of a deal or something like that. Never got paid anything, but I was always his lawyer. [laughter] That was a pro bono deal, too. But Joe was a special guy. I just got a kick out of Joe. I was really sad—Joe went into an operation and never came out of it.

Joe was a fighter at UNR. He was on the boxing team for the Block N Society. Of course, Joe's life story was the fact that he got captured at Wake Island and spent four years in a Japanese prison camp and survived. And survived! He'd never tell me all those stories, but once in a while I'd get a drink with him, and he'd tell me some of those stories, and it was spectacular. He spent a lot of time in China in a prison camp, a Japanese prison camp in China. Then at the end of the war, they picked him up in Japan in a prison camp. I think they actually buried him here once or twice in Reno before that. A lot of heart in Joe, like Bob, and about twice the size of Bob. He was a bigger guy, and Joe was a great guy.

My family had a bakery right here. We had the Silver State Bakery here. I used to come down as a kid and clean the ovens and things after school in seventh and eighth grade. My dad played the horses, and played the horses too much. My dad died when I was sixteen or seventeen years old. That just was a part of our life.

I was a three-sport letterman. Football, basketball, and track. I also played softball in the summertime. I was heavily involved with sports. I always played sports. And worked. I worked all the time. I worked for the Southern Pacific.

I met someone who was eighty-five years old. His name was Van Tassel, and he used to work with my dad on the dock down there. I was trucking freight, lifting freight. In those days, they didn't have forklifts. [laughter] It was fun.

I worked while I was going through school, too, at Union Square Garage in San Francisco, and driving a truck, too. I worked all through undergraduate school and graduate school. Four years. I used to go to school from eight to twelve, lunch, worked from one to nine-thirty on Monday nights. The rest of the nights were one to six, and all day Saturday. I was married then and had a son, Gary. I was a busy guy. But I think it's been a great life. I have been a lawyer, in the gaming business, and the wine business. A great life.

THOMAS R.C. “SPIKE” WILSON

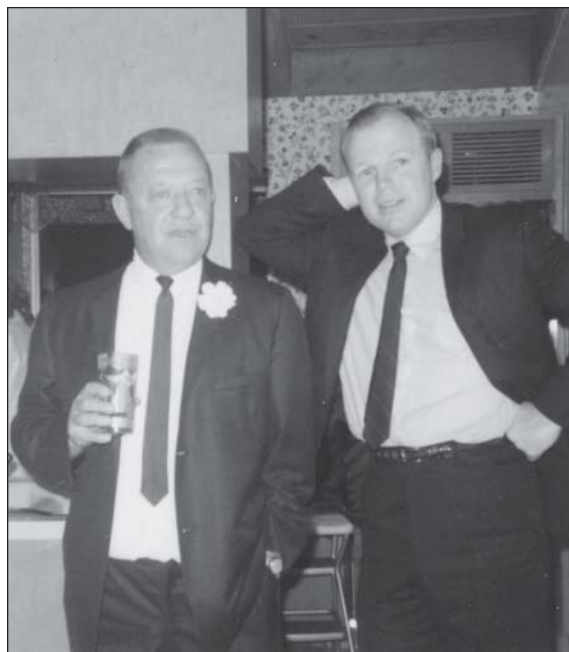
Thomas R.C. “Spike” Wilson is a descendant of Theodore Winters of Washoe Valley on his mother’s side. His mother was Ina May Winters, who married Thomas C. Wilson, an advertising man. Wilson joined Bible, McDonald and Carano in 1964, and he had a political career in the Nevada Legislature as a State Senator. He is married to Janice Pine Wilson, daughter of Newt Crumley, a well known entrepreneur from Elko, who ran the Holiday Hotel in Reno.

I was born in April of 1935 in San Francisco. Even though my parents were living in San Mateo at that time, both were from here and were raised here. My father had gone to school at the University of Nevada, and my mother had gone to school in the Bay Area—she was a history major at Mills College—but then she came here to the University of Nevada and got a graduate degree in teaching. A couple of years after that, they married and were in the Bay Area for a few years—not many—two or three, I guess, because my dad had a job in the Bay Area but then moved back up here. In Reno, he was in the advertising business for many years. He owned his own business and had advertising programs for clients and that sort of thing. I have one sister who is

five years younger than I am. She was born in Reno, and we were raised here and went to school here. I went away to college and away to law school, and then came back here. I went to Stanford as an undergraduate and Georgetown for law school.

When I was admitted to the Nevada bar, I got a job as an assistant United States attorney with the Department of Justice here in Nevada. The U.S. Attorney’s Office had an office in Reno and Las Vegas, and I was the only lawyer in the Reno office. I had a secretary, and the office manager was there, but that was it. In Las Vegas, there were two assistant U.S. attorneys, and the U.S. attorney in Las Vegas. I did that for somewhere between two and three years, and that was trial work, essentially, trying civil cases, and prosecuting criminal cases.

I had to try Joe Conforte for income tax evasion. I had a couple of other tax cases. There was a series of criminal cases, violations of federal law that I had to prosecute, of all kinds, and there were a lot of those. I was in trial almost all the time. I got stuck with holdover cases from the prior administration. One was the Golden Nugget rooster case. It was seized by the Treasury



Bob with Spike Wilson, ca. 1971.

Department as an inappropriate use of gold. It wasn't sanctioned by whatever the federal rules were that governed the use of gold, and not surprisingly, the jury found in favor of Dick Graves, who owned the Nugget then and had this golden rooster; the outcome was not a surprise. [laughter] But the point being that the cases were varied, and in some cases, rather strange, like that one. There just was a lot of litigation, a lot of criminal litigation: violations of federal law, interstate kidnapping, bank burglaries, and robberies; plus a lot of civil cases as well. It was a busy time. I learned a lot. I did enjoy it.

John Ross was the federal judge when I was sworn in, whom I respected and liked. After a couple of years, he passed away, and Bruce Thompson was then appointed U.S. District Court Judge, whom I also respected and liked. So I tried a lot of cases before those two judges, and between Judge Ross's death and Bruce Thompson's appointment, I tried many cases before federal judges from other states: Idaho, Oregon, Washington, California, and Arizona. They would be here on assignment, because we didn't have a sitting judge then. So that was

interesting, because they all were different, and all were very good, which was an education for me. So it was a busy time, but it was a good post-graduate education.

I was admitted to the Bar in 1961, and I was in the U.S. Attorney's Office, and then I joined Bible, McDonald, Carano—Jensen had just left. That was about 1964. Leo Bergin joined after me, and the firm just continued to grow after that. We all knew each other, and Alan Bible, who was in the senate then, encouraged me. Anyway, it just evolved.

The office was on South Virginia Street, but South Virginia Street is considered downtown now. It was north of California Avenue, north of Liberty Street and about a block on the east side of the street. The building is no longer there. It was a short walk to the courthouse. Just a couple of blocks south of it was the old State Street Building in the park, and the river. The town was very small then.

It was a busy time in the office. There were business cases for the most part, and those were a real mix, different kinds of civil cases, business cases.

With respect to criminal cases, we'd get a call from the clerk, who would say, "You've been appointed to represent so and so, who has been charged with" whatever the offense was, "and it's pending in" whichever the department was in the Second Judicial District Court. So we would represent that defendant. That was our job. In the larger states, I imagine they had public defender offices before we did here because we were so much smaller in population. Reno and Las Vegas were both very much smaller. Later on, public defender offices were publicly financed and organized just for that purpose, and they didn't have to draft lawyers to do it anymore. [laughter] The county had a good thing going. They didn't have to fund a public defender, and I don't recall getting paid, so I don't think they had to pay the lawyers.

At that time, Senator Bible could be a member of the law firm. They've since changed the rule, and wisely. It was really inappropriate to

have a member of congress's name on a law firm, and participating in the law firm. It was a conflict, and, not long after that, they passed a rule that members of congress couldn't do that, so his name came off the door, but he didn't practice law, so it didn't really have any effect on the office. The office did what the office did, and he was rarely there, except to come by and say hello, or if he needed a place to work when he happened to be in town. Leo Bergin and, eventually, John Frankovich joined the firm, and it just has continued to grow.

It was interesting and busy. Everybody had a secretary, and there was a receptionist. The office was smaller then, obviously. It was a mix of cases. We were from time to time appointed to defend a criminal case, but that was a small percentage of our work. Our work was principally business work and commercial issues, a civil trial when necessary, and appellate work. We often went into each other's offices and discussed things. That's still true. It made sense to talk about cases. Oftentimes they were interesting. Sometimes there'd be an issue or a problem that needed discussion, and so we could talk about it. That was very helpful. People would have different perspectives on a legal issue or a factual issue or some aspect about something I was working on, and so it was very collegial and very informal and a lot of fun; it still is.

We had summer clerks when the law school students were home, or we often would just have one or two law clerks that were studying for the Bar [exam], and then they had to wait after they took the exam to find out whether they'd been admitted, so they'd still work for us. The firm was glad to have them, because they did a lot of research work, and they were glad to have the income and wanted the work. So it was a happy convenience, and that's true of a lot of firms. I think everybody did that, and young lawyers who were studying for the Bar or waiting for the Bar results needed a place to work and needed the money. Most of them had families and that sort of thing, so that was pretty common.

With billing, it probably depended on the client, but I don't recall specifically if we did bill hourly. Probably, in some cases we did, and some cases we didn't. Sometimes a case would be on a contingency if it was a plaintiff's case of some kind. Commercial cases usually were not. Those were usually based on an hourly rate. That was pretty customary, generally.

Leo Bergin was a good friend of mine. We took the Bar at the same time and knew each other. He was doing some work with Gordon Rice, and Gordon was a retired judge, and I think Leo was interested in joining the firm, and we were interested in having him, and he's been a partner ever since. The next office was kind of small at 60 Court Street. We were right across from the courthouse, on the south end of the courthouse, and there was a receptionist, and there were three offices. Downstairs there was a law library and, a couple of offices. Leo was downstairs. [laughter] He said he started there, and then not long after, we moved over on to the other building.

We couldn't find a place for the new office. We looked around for office space, and there wasn't any. We were under pressure to take on additional lawyers. The practice was growing, and everybody was busy. We were kind of trapped, and we couldn't find space to rent. We looked around in the bank building and wherever we could, and there just wasn't a lot of space available. I had a friend who had a piece of property. It was a quarter of a block on Flint and Ridge Streets, just a couple of blocks over here just south of the river, just off of Court Street. So we ended up going to the bank and borrowing some money to buy the property and to finance the construction of a building. The building occupied at least a quarter of the block. We were there for a good many years. It had four stories, plus an underground garage, plus parking on the surface. It was great. We had plenty of room and added more lawyers once we were over there. But we had no other place to go; we couldn't find space to rent, and there wasn't a space to buy, so we

had to build our own. It was a nice building. I miss it in some ways.

The collegial atmosphere was better there, it opened up more, and we had more access to other people. It worked out very well. It was a good building, and we had lots of parking, and it was downtown. It was east of Arlington and just south of the river. We had good views out the windows and were *still* just a couple of blocks from the courthouse. We still have a pretty good view now. It's a pretty place, Reno is. [laughter]

Well, there are a lot of funny stories in practicing law. The practice was interesting generally, because our practice was a commercial practice, a business practice for the most part, which did involve trial work, but also transactional work, so it kind of grew the way the state grew. Like a lot of firms, we become part of the history because we're representing or doing legal work for people that are making the economy grow so it was vibrant and vital and interesting and relevant to what was going on. Our work reflected how the area was growing, and how the business climate changed, not just getting bigger, but different kinds of businesses.

Bill Lear, who invented the Learjet, was a client of mine. He and his family moved here, and he acquired a large piece of property out at Stead and an airplane hangar or two. His business at that time was conceiving and designing new airplanes. He had already done the Learjet and was working on some other advanced types of aircraft. So somehow I ended up doing some work for him, which continued over the years, which was just very interesting, very different. It was kind of exciting, because it was unusual, including a case in Chicago that I tried.

Bill Lear had designed the first wide-body business jet, which was called The Challenger, and it was purchased by a Canadian company called Canadair and was owned by the Canadian government. The company built fighter planes during World War II, and they were interested in manufacturing this. They later were acquired by Bombardier of Montreal, which is a very fine

manufacturing company, and this business jet was developed. Then it was stretched, and it was designed to be stretched to a regional passenger commuter of fifty passengers, and it's being re-stretched again to seventy-five. So that was interesting and exciting. We had to litigate the question of whether this regional jet was royalty-bearing or whether it had been changed to such an extent that it was an entirely different aircraft and immune from the royalty provisions of the contract.

So Bombardier had filed an action against Lear in Chicago. It was technically an arbitration agreement, but the venue was in Chicago, and it was a trial in form. Both parties selected three people to be judges who were a retired judge and two lawyers. We would try the case in a mock courtroom. There was some discovery, a lot of document discovery, no depositions, but it was a full-fledged trial. That went on for the average of two weeks a month for over a year. But it was a different and an interesting kind of case, and having majored in English literature at Stanford, I was uniquely qualified, of course, to try a case involving the engineering and aerodynamic qualities of the aircraft. [laughter] I had a lot of good engineering help. But it was great fun with a lot of work and good lawyers on the other side. Our client prevailed.

Bob did legal work for Ernie Primm, and I was involved in one case that had to go to court involving Ernie Primm. That was the only one, and that's one that Bob asked me to try. Ernie Primm had signed an agreement with a fellow; he was a producer of some kind of a show. Primm owned what was called the Primadonna Club, and it was very successful. It was a casino and bar, and they had shows. It had music and dancing, but I don't know what all it had because I never saw the show, so all I knew was that this fellow was to produce the show, and apparently Primm became dissatisfied with how the show was coming together, and he didn't like it. I don't recall why he didn't like it. I wasn't involved at all until after he had torn up the contract and said he wasn't going to go forward and got sued by the producer.

Then there was a lawsuit, and it was set for trial, so Bob asked me if I would try it. I didn't know anything about the case, but I found out what I could, and the trial was coming up pretty quickly. There wasn't a lot done before the trial, so there weren't any depositions, and I don't know that there was any discovery. I think we just went in—it was a *jury* trial. So I just put on a clean suit on the first day and went to trial.

It was here in district court. John Barrett was the district judge and it was Department Two. We had a list of the jurors with some background. They filled out a questionnaire, and we knew what was on the questionnaire of each of the jurors. So we were to pick the jury and go to trial. I didn't know much about the case; about all I knew was what I've just explained. We went down to the courthouse, because they couldn't settle it. I don't recall whether they tried to settle it or not, but everybody was mad at that point. Ernie Primm had terminated the contract, and the fellow had sued, and I'm sure he had money invested in this thing, because he had employees and people that were going to be in the show and all of that. So he had some expense and some damages. I don't recall why Primm terminated the contract, other than generally he didn't like the show for some reason. [laughter]

Bob asked me if I'd try the case, and I said, "Yes. I'll try and help you out. I don't know much about the case. I don't know what the defenses are, but let's give it a try. Now, I want you to sit between Ernie and me. I don't want to have to listen to him. So I'll sit on the inside...." The jury box was on the side, and the judge was in the front, of course, and our counsel table was nearest the jury, and the plaintiff's table was next to me on the other side—I didn't want to listen to Ernie because I wanted to concentrate on the case, and I didn't want him talking to me while I was trying to listen and think. So I wanted him out of my hair. He was kind of talkative.

The venire was sitting in the courtroom, that is, the potential jurors. There were probably thirty of them, and the clerk would draw a name out

of the box and call the name. That person would walk up and take juror's seat number one, and they'd fill each of the seats until they got twelve. If one was challenged or was excused, they would pull another number. The process required the potential jurors to answer questionnaires, but there were questions, and the lawyers asked questions of the jurors, or the judge might ask questions of the jurors, whether they could be impartial, whether they knew anything about the case, all of that.

Ernie was a little different. He was kind of a showboat. He was colorful, and he showed up in a sports coat that was pretty loud. He looked like he'd been to the track. It had a lot of stripes and checkers and things, and Ernie was kind of colorful, too. He had a toupée that he wore, and the toupée was bright orange in color, so he looked like he was right off the stage. The jurors were all there early, waiting out in the lobby, and it got a little exciting, because Ernie wandered into the ladies' bathroom—he didn't read the name on the door—with his loud sport coat and his orange hair, and all the ladies came running out of the bathroom, and they, of course, were our jurors.

The morning was a little unsettled, and there was a certain sense of anticipation, I'm sure, because of all of this before the case started. So anyway, the room's finally full of jurors, and we're starting at nine o'clock to convene. The clerk is pulling names out of the box and reading the names, and those potential jurors were taking their seats in the jury box. Ernie was closest to the jury box, and he was watching these people and looking at them. These were going to be his jury if they weren't challenged or excused for some reason, and he got a little agitated.

He was watching one fellow, who was in the top row in the middle. I think it was juror number four maybe, and juror number four was a midget, and Ernie couldn't take his eyes off the midget. You know, old gamblers are kind of superstitious anyway. They are of a different school, and he may have thought the midget was a bad omen or something, but he was very superstitious, and he

was very uncomfortable. So there he was, watching the people that took their seats in the jury box, and the judge would ask each juror a series of questions, and then ask if we had any questions. The judge was going through this, and Ernie couldn't take his eyes off this one juror. Bob was sitting between me and Ernie. Bob had a hearing impairment in one ear, his left ear, which was the one that was closest to Primm. He had a hearing aid, but he'd left it in the icebox that morning, so he came down to court without the benefit of his hearing aid. So we're sitting in court, and the jurors have filled the seats in the jury box, and the judge is asking them questions. While all this was going on, Ernie was sitting there. Well, he couldn't take his eyes off this juror who was the midget. I think Ernie thought midgets were sort of an ill omen of some kind, unnatural, but he was uncomfortable so he leaned into McDonald and said "get rid of the fucking midget." Bob didn't have his hearing aid in, so he couldn't hear him, so he said, "What?"

Ernie raised his voice and said, "Get rid of the fucking midget!"

The courtroom was growing a little quiet, but Bob *still* didn't hear him, because he didn't have his hearing aid in. So he said again, "What?"

So Ernie shouted at him to "Get rid of the fucking midget!" So Bob turned to me and said, "Ernie has a problem."

I said, "I don't care what his problem is, but shut him up." So I don't know what your dad said to Ernie, but Ernie couldn't take his eyes off the midget, and he got more and more agitated and more and more agitated, and the judge kept asking questions of the other jurors after he had regained control of his courtroom again. Finally, Ernie was beside himself, because here was a midget, which I think in medieval times may have been an ill omen or something. Anyway, I suspect Ernie was superstitious and believed a lot of those old tales, and he was just transfixed and couldn't take his eye off this fellow. We reached a point where we were going to recess, and the judge had finished his questions of the jurors.

We were going to take a recess, and then we were going to challenge whoever we wanted to challenge and draw new names. So as he took the recess, why, the clerk, of course, said, "All rise," and Ernie thought we were going into the next phase of the trial.

He jumped up and pointed at the midget, and he said to McDonald, "You didn't get rid of that s.o.b. He's *still* there!"

Well, it was *deathly* quiet in the courtroom, and I didn't know what to do, so I just ignored both Bob and Ernie and the jury, and I looked at something else. The clerk escorted the jury out into the jury room, and the judge said, "I want to see counsel in chambers." So we went into chambers, and, of course, Judge Barrett wanted to know what in hell was going on in his courtroom. At that point, all Ernie wanted to do was to get rid of the case, so we asked the judge if we could confer privately, and the judge said, "By all means, please do that." So Ernie and Bob talked, and the last thing I remember was Ernie was writing a check. There wasn't a table handy, so McDonald was leaning over with his hands on his knees, and Ernie had the check on McDonald's back, and he was writing out a settlement check that we had been able to agree to with the other side, and went back into chambers, and the case was over. [laughter]

The case was settled, the check was delivered, the complaint was dismissed, the jury was sent home, and fortunately, we didn't have to go any further. I suspect if we had had to go further, why, we would not have done any better. [laughter]

I think everybody talked about that case for years afterwards. The judge did, and it was a funny story. It was a classic story, both about Ernie, but also about Bob. [laughter]

Don did a lot of work in real estate and development and was good at it. Bob knew everybody and attracted a lot of business and knew a good legal case when he saw one, or knew a good transaction when he saw one. And the firm had a variety of clients with different kinds of issues. We were all pretty busy. The firm was

gradually growing and grew at a pretty good rate. On Ridge Street we started with half of the top floor, then we had all of the top floor, and then we had the top two floors, and we were still growing, and just finally decided we had to move, which we did, over to this space.

I like to do, and most of my work is involved in, commercial litigation. It's hard to categorize or describe it, because it's very varied. Each case is different, because it involves different problems and different aspects of the law, but they're business cases for the most part. I hope I'm good in the courtroom. I always have to do research, but what the research shows is what the law is on a certain point, and that's the process of writing briefs. We all have to write briefs from time to time. But most of my work has been in trial work at the district court level and appellate work in the Supreme Court. Occasionally, we'll have a case in federal court, sometimes done at the Ninth Circuit, and it's hard to categorize it. It's never the same kind of case or the same issues of law because the factual situations are all different. The law is varied depending upon what the legal issue happens to be so it makes it fun, and it's always challenging.



Don Carano and Spike Wilson, ca. 1999.

I served in the state senate for about sixteen years. That's not a full-time thing. I didn't view it as a career. I don't know that I'd call it a career. It's more like community service. It is in some states, but here, the legislature meets every two years, and then the session is for four months. The rest of the time you had a normal life, and it wasn't really affected much by the fact that you served in the legislature. But I ran—I guess it was in 1970—for the state senate and was lucky and won, and I was a pretty new and pretty green member of the senate. There were only twenty-one in the senate, forty-two in the assembly. The new legislative building had just been built. That 1971 session was the first session in that building and my first session, and I enjoyed that immensely.

The genius of the legislatures or the Congress is that people come from different areas; backgrounds are different, and it's a mix as the legislature or the Congress is designed to be, and they're supposed to be representative. So, of course, we had people from all over the state, all the counties. It was a lot of work because we'd show up early and stay late and had committee meetings and assignments and all that, but the questions were interesting, and it was much less partisan then than it is now. We weren't conscious of party at all.

I was elected the same year Mike O'Callaghan was elected governor. That was a lot of fun, because he was a great guy to work with and was colorful, but a really good public servant. Most people didn't view our work as a party issue. Nobody cared about party in the last analysis, because it wasn't very relevant. We never had a party caucus on how to vote. We'd have one at the beginning of the session to elect leadership. I'm a Democrat, but you couldn't tell the difference for the most part between the Democrats and the Republicans. The state was pretty conservative, and there are only twenty-one of us, so we'd meet in caucus originally and elect leadership and make committee assignments. The committee assignments were important, because a huge amount of the work is done in

committee. So we all had committee chairmanships. I had one my first session and did all the way through. It was lot of work, but it was gratifying, too.

I had chaired the committee on environment, and we had a lot of environmental legislation. I think I did that my first session, and also served on judiciary all the way through, except when I served on senate finance. But it was quite varied. I don't know that I can think of any one subject.

There was one session was somewhat unusual. We had had a bi-state agency at Lake Tahoe, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, and Coe Swobe was instrumental in developing that. Paul Laxalt was the governor then, and it was before I was in the legislature. But it was the first step in a bi-state compact agency to try and control growth and protect the environment and natural resources of that basin. But there were a lot of people that were opposed to or wary of giving up jurisdiction, and I think the essential element of that was that construction projects, development projects, had to be approved by the agency, but the counties would pass on them first. If they approved it, then it went to the agency if it was within the Tahoe basin, the TRPA, and it took the vote of both delegations, California and Nevada, as I recall, to cancel a project, to turn one down. They had to approve it, but both had to agree to turn it down, or it would stand approved and go forward. But it was a good first step. It created the idea of a bi-state agency that wouldn't be limited by the borders of the state within the Tahoe Basin, because growth and development on either side affects the other side, and we really can't separate it in terms of its effect on natural resources.

But there was concern that if the growth rate was increasing, the state population was getting larger, that more people would be discovering Tahoe. They realized the development possibilities and the economic potential that the Tahoe Basin had, and concern again began to develop that the agency really needed to be

changed, because it simply did not have the teeth to protect the environment. It was a good start, and without that first step, there probably would never have been a second step.

I know there was a meeting or two during a couple of sessions where a bunch of us got together with our California counterparts, but those discussions got nowhere, and there wasn't any agenda. There really wasn't leadership involved in those attempts to get together and improve the compact terms. It was a failure, and I was frustrated over that. I remember going to a Stanford function and was asked why we'd failed, and I didn't have a very good answer. This was "Big Game" time, and this was from a county commissioner in the Bay Area. During the California/Stanford game, why, there was a little single-engine, high-wing plane circling the stadium, pulling a banner that said, "Save Lake Tahoe. Write your congressman."

I thought, "Well, if it had come to that, why, Lake Tahoe's lost."

So I got to thinking about it, and I called a fellow who had been at that meeting, Victor Calvo, who was in the California Assembly and was involved, and said, "Why don't we talk about this and see if we can do something. I don't know if we can."

He said, "Well, I'll talk to John Garamendi," who was in the California State Senate then and was also involved in this issue, and he called back and said, "Well, why don't we get together and talk about it."

So I met with them. I didn't have any authority. It wasn't on the Senate's list of interim projects or anything, where we have study committees between sessions. I didn't know either of them, but they were very cordial. My question was, "We never really got this thing off the ground, and maybe what we simply ought to do is quietly see if we can put something together?"

I said, "I've talked to our majority leader and told him I was going to meet with you fellows. We might be able to authorize a group to go to

work, if you're interested in trying to work something out. Otherwise, we're going to be behind the curve. Development's continuing."

To make a long story short, they had an appetite for that. I didn't know them, and they didn't know me, but they were willing to risk the effort, and I was. So I came back and reported to Senator Jim Gibson, who was our majority leader. He was from Henderson in Clark County. There was a real appetite to try and do something, so I called Joe Dini, who was Speaker of the Assembly. I needed to have somebody from the assembly, and he was the logical person. He was the leader of the assembly and had an interest in the subject. So we had some introductory meetings, and then we began to meet more regularly and talk about the issues and organize the work assignments and what we had to do and talk about, what the weaknesses were. I'm truncating this. This went on for a substantial period of time.

I obtained authority from our Legislative Commission, which meets during the interim, for some staff to be assigned. Fred Weldon, who was great help, and I got authorization to utilize him and authority to work with Joe Dini and the California representatives. So we met with Vic Calvo from the California Assembly and John Garamendi from the California Senate. We started having meetings. They had staff assigned, and we began working on this. We would meet in Truckee; we would meet at Tahoe. I think we met at Chinquapin once. We met at my house here in Reno. We met down in Auburn. We had a lot of meetings, and the more we got into this, the more work there was. It developed and developed and developed, and to make a long story very short, we finally rewrote the compact from the ground up.

The Nevada Legislature meets only bi-annually, so I said, "We're going to have to have a special session." Nevada meets only every two years, and only for four months.

I said, "California is going to have to go first. I can't justify asking a governor to ask for a special session, not knowing whether California is going

to approve this. So California is going to have to lead on this, take the first step. You are in session almost all the time anyway."

And we had a very good relationship. We didn't know each other going into this, and there is always a lot of political risk. You don't know the people you're working with. It's a sensitive subject. There's a vast amount of public interest in it. Everybody's watching. We knew the old agreement was not adequate, and it had to be improved. We were going to have development resistance to this.

We reached a point where we thought we had an agreeable compact; it was much different from the old one, and the decisions were not advisory. You didn't have to have two delegations agreeing. They had to work together. It was a tough agreement that we felt would work. Because Nevada had to proceed with a special session, California had to go first. Before we reached an agreement, and I said that Nevada would have to have a special session, I went to see Bob List, who was then governor.

I said to him, "Joe Dini and I think we can do this. We think that we've got an agreement that's justifiable. We have confidence in our California counterparts. They've been good to work with. I've told them that Nevada was not going to go first with a special session. We couldn't justify that, but if California passed it, I would talk to you to see if you would call a special session just for the purpose of approving the compact agreement. It can't wait till the next general session."

He agreed to call a special session. It was that important. We didn't want the new compact agreement to fail, and we didn't want to delay creating it, because the basin needed it, we felt. At Lake Tahoe then, there really were no meaningful restraints on growth. It was easy to divide the county representatives from Nevada and California and approve projects. So for all of those reasons, we really had to move, and it was important that we did so, because the new Tahoe Regional Planning Agency had to then get to work

developing regulations once it was reconstituted, which are like ordinances, on how it was going to do its work and what the guidelines were going to be, and the standards and the requirements. There was a *huge* amount of staff work that went into rewriting the bi-state compact agreement as the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). It was a major project. Took a lot of work. We had a lot of meetings.

When completed, the California Assembly passed it, and it went to the Senate, and there was some delay for some reason that took a little while. The California Senate passed it. Then it went to the Governor. The Governor was Jerry Brown.

I got a call one night at home, and the call was from Gray Davis. Gray Davis, at that time, was Governor Brown's Chief of Staff, I think, and Gray Davis said, "You know, we've looked at this compact, and the California legislature has passed it."

I said, "Yes, I know they have. Our legislature is waiting for it. California's Assemblyman Victor Calvo and Senator John Garamendi have the legislature's approval. Our governor is prepared to call a special session."

He said, "Well, we'd like a few changes."

I said, "Well, I hadn't heard about any changes. We had concluded our discussions on the compact and finished writing it and agreed that it was final, and it was going to go to the respective legislators and governors."

He said, "Well, we'd like a few changes."

I said, "Well, how do Victor Calvo and John Garamendi feel about that?"

He said, "Oh, we haven't talked to them yet. The governor wanted me to talk to you first."

I said, "Well, I'm in the Senate here in Nevada, and I'm not going to presume to talk to you about changes you may want to make to a new compact agreement that has been approved by Victor Calvo and John Garamendi and both houses of the California Legislature. They have approved this compact. It's on your boss's *desk*, and you're calling me now, and you haven't told Victor or

John you were going to ask me to agree to some changes to the new bi-state Tahoe compact agreement that your legislature just approved?"

He said, "Yes, that's right."

I said, "I think you better call John and Victor and have this conversation with them. This conversation is over." And the conversation ended.

This was *most* inappropriate. Mr. Davis and the Governor went around them. So the next morning, of course, I called Victor and John and told them what had happened. They were outraged. I had told Mr. Davis that we had worked on this a *long* time. This has not been a rush job. An awful lot of care and attention has gone into this effort. A lot of people have been consulted, and this was no time to be talking about an amendment.

So anyway, several days passed, and finally I got a call from either Victor or John who said, "Somebody called up and said, 'Psst, he [Governor Brown] signed it.'"

I said, "OK. Have it shipped over, and we'll have our special session of the Nevada Legislature."

Nevada had its special session in one afternoon as a "Committee of the Whole." Joe Dini and I spoke, and we presented what the compact did and said, and what the changes were and all that. I think the vote was unanimous in the Senate. It either was unanimous in the Assembly, or we lost one vote. I don't recall which.

It went to the Congress, and the Congress ratified it, as the Congress was required, and the President signed it, and it's been the law ever since.

So it was an interesting piece of work, but also, hopefully, it has made some contribution to the Tahoe effort. It seems to have survived, that is, the compact agreement. I hope it's still effective. Conditions change, and you hope the agreement has been adequate to handle the change in circumstances and the new problems that come up.

The development pressures are horrendous in a situation like that, and it's hard to protect any lake which has Tahoe's beauty. One hopes that

the tools of protecting it and trying to govern it are adequate, and I hope these are. I don't know what the lake would be like now *without* the compact. Probably it would not be the same.

Nevada is a great place to live and a great place to raise kids. My children all grew up here, and most of them still live here. The state has changed a lot, but still, with all the change, relatively speaking, when you compare it to the growth rates in other states, states like California, Nevada has been able to retain a *lot* of its essential character and certainly a lot of its environmental qualities. It still has the old spirit of independence, I think, and that it always will.

Back to my profession, a law firm should be a collection of individuals. It needs the diversity, independence, and different points of view, and different values and different perspectives, and that's all valuable. We want a quality of work that is professionally satisfying. We don't compromise that. But the thing that's fun about the law is that it is challenging, and it's different. We practice a lot of different subjects of the law in this firm. People have different kinds of practices, but that's part of the interest, too. And what's important is the level of collegiality in a law firm. It ought to be a learning environment and a collection of personalities and character of people that we enjoy and respect at the same time, and that's really important.

One has to certainly have a level of mutual respect because it's simply a requirement of staying together; it has been a lot of fun, and I have enjoyed it. Everybody in the firm has different and varying interests of one kind or another, which also makes it interesting.

I've been proud of the way this firm has developed. I think everybody is pretty principled and has high standards of ethics. It's a good firm. It's an A-rated firm. It, I think, enjoys a lot of respect, and I enjoy my colleagues. They're good lawyers, but they're also good people. They're also good company. Practicing law is a lot of work, but it's gratifying in a lot of ways, and sometimes you are even able to do something good. It's not

just people in adversary positions arguing with each other. It's also intellectually stimulating, and that's a large part of it, too. Every subject seems to be a new and different one. [laughter] You never repeat yourself, or you don't seem to, much. I don't.

Bob McDonald knows everybody, and that makes it a lot of fun. He's been great fun to work with and to be around and is just good company. A lot of laughs, a lot of funny stories, most of which I won't tell. [laughter] The firm has been a great collection of people, interesting people, with a lot of diversity, practicing in different areas of the law on different subjects, having different talents and abilities than others, and all usually being a pretty good source of judgment.

The firm has been involved in the community. Everybody does different things and contributes, and this firm certainly has. The firm has been a good citizen, as have its lawyers and staff. When the legislature was in session, I'd be gone for four months, wouldn't see the office, and never, *ever* did I have any pressure or influence applied by any member of the firm on legislation that was before the senate while I was there, which I appreciated. It just wasn't done. I was there for sixteen years.

LEO BERGIN

Besides being a senior partner at McDonald Carano Wilson LLP, Leo Bergin is an owner of a farm in Yerington that grows organic lettuce and alfalfa, Nevada Fresh Pak Farms. The Truckee Meadows Boys and Girls Club have him as one of their Active Directors and Vice President. Leo's alma mater, Notre Dame, can count on him as an avid fan of their football team. He has fond, funny memories of traveling with Bob McDonald on many occasions.

I was born in Paso Robles, California, on May 15, 1936. I was raised in Los Angeles until 1947 when my family moved to Fallon, Nevada. I attended Churchill County High School, graduating from there in 1954. I went to the University of Notre Dame and graduated from there in 1958, and then on to Stanford Law School, graduating in 1961.

How I became involved with Robert L. McDonald and the law firm is a strange set of circumstances. My mother and Spike Wilson's mother were good friends, and Spike Wilson and I studied for the bar exam together. Thereafter, Spike went to the U.S. Attorney's office and then joined Bible, McDonald, Carano, and Jensen. Mr. Jensen left the firm, and there were just the three of them. Over time Spike felt that McDonald

and Carano were running his life, and he didn't get an equal voice in the administration of the law firm, so he asked me to come to work with the firm to be a partner. I had been practicing law by myself at that time. So I joined the law firm to equalize the voice in the firm. Unfortunately for Spike, instead of a two-to-one vote, it now became a three-to-one vote with the firm, and Spike was now a smaller minority because my philosophy and Bob's and Don's were much more in line with each other, and we were much more relaxed people in the form of how to practice law, how to divide up money and who had the say to do what.

When Spike approached me to join the firm, there was no sort of hesitation about it because I knew them. I was scheduled to join the firm January 1, 1970. I didn't make it till July 1, 1970, because I was handling Donald Carano's divorce. As a matter of fact, I continued to handle it and get it resolved after I became a member of the firm. Like I say, earlier I was practicing by myself pretty much. I had offices I shared with either Gordon Rice or Lloyd Smith.

McDonald and Carano—these guys were busy, and they'd send clients over if they were too busy to handle it, like the Clark Brothers and



Leo Bergin and Bob, ca. 1993.

several others. I knew them, and they knew that they needed more help, because they weren't able to handle it. So, listen, I'd been around them and probably was closer in behavioral matters. I'd go to the Rumpus Room or El Borracho or wherever and drink with them and have a good time, where Spike would all be doing the proper things with the ballet or the orchestra and such. I was more of the down-to-earth, blue-collar attorney than Spike was. So by that time I was married to Mary Kay, and she was against me doing it—joining them. It didn't make any difference to me, and I was going to do it because, for me, I could see even the trend in 1970; sole practitioners were becoming a thing of the past, because as sole practitioner you had to do everything, all phases of law, and the law was becoming much more diversified.

I realized that if a person has a degree of specialization that they ought to be a member of

a bigger firm. I was not a litigator, and I'm not now a litigator. In the past I had to do it, which I didn't like. So going in there with Spike being a litigator and Don and Bob being business attorneys, which is what we really were, it was a natural fit. As we grew, then Paul Bible came in, and he was a litigator, and we brought in litigators, et cetera. So for me it was a great thing, and I just hope that my addition to the firm didn't hamper them. We're still around and alive and twelve times bigger than when I started, so I guess it all worked out OK.

The best example I can probably give of how the dynamics of the firm changed once I joined, and actually helped Spike, was this: I said that it was a two-to-one vote before, and I guess in the past when any money came in, the partners took the money out immediately, forgetting that they had to pay purveyors and help and everything. So I was here about two or three months, and we

needed some new typewriters, so somebody called up IBM and asked to buy typewriters. I got a phone call from a Mr. Sullivan, who was the IBM salesman, and he said, "Leo, I'd love to sell you typewriters, anything you want, but in order for us to sell it to you, the credit of McDonald, Carano is *not* any good; if you'll sign personally, I'll sell you whatever you want." This would probably be in 1970. Upon hearing that—obviously we needed the typewriters—so I said, "OK, I will sign. I will be personally responsible for anything that we buy from you." So I signed on, and immediately after that, the dynamics of the firm changed a little bit, because then I started handling the finances of the law firm and handled them until 2002, when I no longer was the managing partner. During that time, we did not have any problem with paying our bills on time, and our credit rating became A+. So, I guess when I tell you that the dynamics changed, they really did change, because we started running the firm like a business, rather than a mom-and-pop store.

That was Spike's problem—that they weren't running it like he wanted, a professional organization—but they managed to pull it off prior to my arrival because of their personalities. Bob and Don could charm the birds out of the tree, and everybody liked them, and everybody knew they were good attorneys, et cetera. Everybody loved them, and they were just a happy-go-lucky group, not worrying as much about the business of practicing law as fulfilling the needs and desires of their clients. So they performed well for their clients, but they were not good business people. Their clients were always first in doing whatever was necessary for their clients, but not paying attention to sending out bills and paying bills. Everything eventually got paid, but sometimes they wouldn't send out bills for a couple, three months. And wait a minute! If we can't stay in business, we're not doing our clients a service, so we started running it a little bit more like a business. But with those two, even though we tried to get everything orderly, with their personalities, Bob would say,

"Oh, yes, he's good for it. Don't worry about it, Leo. He'll pay."

Then I'd bug him a little bit.

"Well, I'll talk to him."

Of course, he never would, and finally, the bookkeeper, or myself, or somebody would have to make sure that the bills were paid, and our invoices went out, so we could get paid to keep going.

The offices when I joined were on Court Street. 60 Court Street and it was part of the old Pioneer Inn. Don and Bob and Spike and a number of other people built the Pioneer Inn, and as an adjunct to it on a separate building was a low-rise building, which held the law offices and the Heart of Reno Wedding Chapel. When I first came, Don and Spike and Bob all were on the first floor, and I was in the basement of the facility—like a mole. We stayed there until 1973, when we built a building at 241 Ridge Street, a four-story building, and we became owners of the building. At that time, there were five of us who owned the building, which was Bob, Don, Spike, myself, and Paul Bible. We stayed in that building until 2003, and we moved to 100 West Liberty. So we did all right on the building, but when I first started with the firm, as I told you, there were four of us, and we have the single offices. Now we have approximately fifty people with offices in both Reno and Las Vegas.

At that time in 1970, we had Ernie Primm with the Primadonna. We had the Incline Village General Improvement District with Art Wood, and I had a bunch of the Italian families: the Capurros, the Quilicis, the Damontes, and all the farmers that owned all the farm ground around the southern part of Reno. I represented Clark Brothers Plumbing and a number of the contractors around. We also did work, I believe, for Harolds Club.

Although they were our predecessors, we eventually became the contemporaries of Jones Vargas—the George Vargas firm—the Woodburn firm, and Lionel Sawyer. They were all pretty stodgy firms. We were a firm that didn't

necessarily wear coats and ties to work. We did our job. We got our work done. Then, and now especially, because of Bob McDonald, we were like a family. We all got along together. We played together, worked together, but took care of our staff. If they got in trouble, we'd lend them money, we'd bail them out, we'd do all kinds of things, because that was Bob's and all of our philosophy, that we might fight amongst ourselves, but against the rest of the world, we were united as a group. And we grew. Bob was the main heartbeat of the firm. He was and is an extremely caring, volatile person. You either loved Bob McDonald, or you hated him. There is absolutely no in-between with Bob McDonald. A person doesn't just know Bob. Like I say, they'll go to the mat for him, or they can't stand him. It was then and still is the same way.

There were a number of the old-time law firms such as Woodburn and George Vargas that loved dealing with Bob, because what Bob told them, that's what was going to happen. Good, bad, or indifferent, if Bob says, "I'm going to do this," or, "I won't do that," they could go to the bank with it. I can only talk about Bob's relationship as an attorney through the 1960s and forward. But people like Gordon Rice, who was a very good attorney, just loved Bob McDonald. He'd shake his head at him, because Bob was supposed to have something done, and Bob would forget about it, and Gordon would call him and raise hell with him. Then they'd get it resolved, and no problem. I mean, he fiercely represented his clients, but Bob wasn't strong on books and stuff like that. He was strong on personality and fairness and the right thing to do in a situation. He was and is a unique person, as far as his personal life and his practice of law.

The only problem with Bob is, then and now, he knows too damn many people, because every friend he would have, they'd call him, and we'd take care of it. Bob would say, "That's no problem. I'll take care of it." Unfortunately, because I was the newest member then—and somehow or other I've retained that distinction—if he had a friend

or somebody that needed help, "Call Leo." Then when he was in the office every day, "Now, Leo, you've got to meet this person. You've got to take care of it." Or now he says, "I'm having this fellow call you, and you've got to take care of him. He's being screwed. You've got to do it." About two-thirds of the time, the guy was not telling Bob the truth, and so we did a lot of work for Bob's friends for no money. I mean, he'd promise the *world* to people, and the world wasn't available. Then he'd work it out or do something, and when it came time to get paid, well, they didn't have any money, and they could talk to Bob. "Oh, that's OK. He's a good guy. Good guy, Leo! Don't worry about him. He'll take care of you." After the first four or five years, I finally figured out, hey, that isn't always the case, but Bob always felt that we had an obligation then and now to help little people. He would help any little person in the whole world, and that's what made him such a fine person, is his dedication to the people that he knew. And he knew a *ton* of people, some rich, some poor. It didn't make a damn bit of difference to Bob. Either he liked you, or he didn't like you. If he liked you, he'd do anything for you. If he didn't like you, he was a little bit different. He would probably try to get even. He was Irish through and through.

Until I wandered through the door, it was extremely Democratic. I am a Republican, always have been a Republican, but even though we have different labels on us as Republicans or Democrats, Bob was probably more conservative than I am as a Republican. Don, although he was registered a Democrat, he was probably more Republican than I am. Spike was a die-hard Democrat, but as Spike pointed out, in the state of Nevada, until really recently, the difference between Republican and Democrat was a label, because of the whole conservative area, but Bob, although a Democrat, and a wild-eyed Democrat, I don't think he's ever voted for a Republican in his life. He was, like I say, more conservative than I was on financial issues, and even public issues. But as time passed, the firm, although it still is

perceived by the public as a Democratic firm, I think there's probably more Republicans in the firm now than Democrats, but the philosophy hasn't changed much. The labels have just changed. Spike, having been in the state senate for two or three terms, certainly gives us the label. And Bob, being on the Democratic Committee and having helped elect senators, congressmen, governors, et cetera, he was always the focus of our political reputation, although sometimes he was more at war with the Democratic caucuses and members of the Democratic Party than he was with everybody else. I wouldn't be at any Democratic meetings, but he had a war with several women party leaders over the years, and Spike would come back, and he'd just shake his head at what Bob would have done, arguing with him and giving him hell, et cetera. But like I say, I don't know, I just heard it second or third-hand.

O'Callaghan was his guiding light. He loved O'Callaghan. He loved every Democrat that was in Washington. He would call them and raise hell with them and want favors from them. He, to this day, can call the Senate Majority Leader, Harry Reid, and he gets a phone call back, because Bob did him favors, and he'll ask for favors. When Bob gets on a project, he's like a cat with a rat; he just is so persevering. If you don't call him back within thirty minutes, back goes a phone call, and the same way personally with his physical problems. If a doctor doesn't call him back in fifteen minutes, he's talking to the nurse; he's talking to the orderly. He'll talk to anybody. On and on it goes. His poor secretary must just shudder at the thought of having to keep calling to find out what the hell's the matter with him. "Why can't I see him?" Bob just raises hell when he wants something done. Tomorrow isn't the answer, ten minutes from now isn't the answer, *yesterday* is the answer. He is extremely focused on what he wants at that time, and to hell with anybody else. Is that a good asset as an attorney? To an extent. Normally, it is, but after a while, if you keep yelling and yelling and yelling, the other side gets awful tired of that, and sometimes it

becomes a Chicken Little deal. You holler and holler and holler enough, and you keep following it, and after awhile when the sky doesn't fall in, then people don't pay attention anymore. But overall, it's a very fine asset. But, like I say, when he's on a project, God help you if you're involved with him. Unfortunately, I'm the one that's most involved with him. I'm the one that has to get the phone call at six o'clock in the morning, "What are we going to do? Where are we going to go? Berg, you've got to do this." On and on. I don't know how he got my home phone number, but he's got that on his automatic dialer. I don't care, obviously, or I'd change my phone number, but when he wants something, he wants it *now*. But that's Bob.

The relationship with Senator Bible in the law firm at that time in the early seventies was that his name was still on the door until about 1974 or 1975. A senator or a congressman's name could be on the door and be part of the firm, although they weren't supposed to obtain compensation for it. We had the name of Bible on the firm. He was never really, in my time, active in our law firm. He never was there. His son later on became a partner in the firm, but the Senator Bible we'd see would come through the door on occasion when he was in town to talk to everybody like a good politician, but he didn't get any of the money from it. But the ethics of the federal government said we had to drop the name. We dropped the name, and I'm guessing it was probably some place in 1975, 1976, sometime along that line.

Did we ever take advantage of that relationship with Alan Bible for myself or for a client? Yes. When a client was dealing with the federal government, such as Ernie Primm when he bought Primm Nevada in southern Nevada—he was having problems with the BLM and various governmental agencies—Bob would call the senator, and the senator would tell him to call somebody else and to get things straightened around. He would use that connection frequently, but not to get an unfair result, only to get the

government off their butt to get something done. I cannot recall any favors or anything he extracted from the senator or the governor or any person in political office that was wrong—just to get them moving. As I said before, that was the persistence of Bob, “By God, they should have done that yesterday.” And if they didn’t do it, then two days later, back would come another phone call to whomever he thought could help his client out.

Do I think that that had to do with the precedent that was set by Senator Pat McCarran’s relationship with the McDonald family? I think it was Bob’s nature. [laughter] I mean, that’s the way politics were run before my time. And Senator Pat McCarran was such a strong person; that was the way it was done, and it’s still done today, not just in Nevada—every place. But some people have different ways of doing things, and, as I’m saying, perseverance was Bob’s strong suit to get things done. A lot of times, people got things done just to get him off their back, because they got tired of having him call them. But that was the way things were done, probably still to a certain extent the same today.

Reno was small when the firm started prior to my time and even the first ten or twelve years that I was with the firm, the state of Nevada was small. Reno was the heartbeat of it. With Las Vegas growing and overwhelming us, we are no longer a significant power structure to demand what we want. And let’s face it, thirty years ago we knew everybody. Now, we’re lucky to know a third of the people that we deal with. When I started here in Reno, there were about two hundred lawyers. Now there are over a thousand. So the old days of calling up somebody and making a deal or resolving something, which Bob was very good at, those days are gone. Everything now is in writing, and everybody’s running to court to sue this person and sue that person, where Bob’s forté was that when there was a dispute or a problem with the other side, he would call up the other side’s attorney. They would work it out. They’d argue, and he’d raise hell, but before

it was all over, they’d get it done without the huge expense of having to file lawsuits. Of course, we didn’t always work that successfully, but a great majority of the time, a *lot* of work was done through handshakes and phone calls, which is no longer done.

It does take the fun out of it a bit. I think that it does, but I am not a litigator. I’m a transactional person, who deals with real property and my Italian clients, and still a lot of what I do is still telephonic and meeting of the minds, et cetera. It’s not as much fun, but it’s sure a heck of a lot better than being a litigator where they can’t trust each other. In my business there’s still a great element of trust in it. A couple of minutes ago, I had a conversation where I resolved a transaction with a phone call. Litigators can’t do that.

Bob’s family members often refer to him as Mr. Magoo. Bob McDonald cannot keep track of his money, his glasses, and his hearing aid. He goes to the dime store and buys his glasses, even though he had several friends who were optometrists that would give him glasses for nothing. After a while they quit doing it, because he’d lose them. He’d just go buy them and break them and lose them. His hearing aids, about half the time he doesn’t have them with him, and then I find out, “Well, the dog ate them. I stepped on them. The battery doesn’t work.” I’m sure that he can’t get insurance on his hearing aids. Now, we’re talking about an eighty-six-year-old man, yes, and it hasn’t changed from the first time I dealt with Bob McDonald, even before I was in the firm. Always, he’d either have a ton of money, cash with a rubber band around it, or he’d be totally broke. When we would go someplace, he would be paying everything or absolutely nothing. He’d say, “Berg, I need some money.” He always paid me back. But he was either flush or had *zero* in his wallet.

He and I went to Costa Rica fishing one time about ten years ago. We were out in the ocean, and the boat flipped over, and we were bobbing around like a pair of corks, him being a wonderful



Bob and Leo Bergin on a fishing trip in Costa Rica.

swimmer and me swimming like a rock. We lost everything, and in the process he lost his pants in the ocean. We got back to shore, and, of course, he had had his money with him in his pants, and that got lost, cameras, everything like that. He turned to me and said, "OK, Berg, the rest of the trip is on you. I'll pay you when I get back." The rest of the trip was on me, but paying back that time was a figment of his imagination. But it was just always that way. We used to go hunting in Mexico or Idaho. He'd go there, and he'd either forget his shells, his fishing pole, his jacket, his shoes, et cetera. Then if you shared a room with him, like when the firm goes on trips for retreats and business, I'm always his designated roommate. You walk in, you haul the stuff in, get it sorted out, and then the next morning you would swear to God there had been a whirlwind through there, because his stuff would be scattered from hell to breakfast. Couldn't find it, "Where are my shoes? Where's my money? Where's my watch? Where are my glasses?"

They'd be about three feet away from him. This has gone on for the last forty years, so it isn't as a result of his older age. It's just all he is. Love him to death, but he's a slob. I mean, he's clean, but he ain't neat. Just exasperating.

He'd forget his briefcase. When you'd go to court with him or someplace, the briefcase would be left at home or something, and then he would write on yellow pages or his scrap paper like an envelope, what the whole deal was and everything. You could guarantee within fifteen minutes it would be lost or on his desk, someplace around there. "God damn it! What did you do with it, Berg?"

I'd say, "Bob, let's stop and look. Where did you last have it?" And we'd go back and find it. Those things were all—just Bob.

The worst thing in his whole life, though, is vehicles. One, he probably was and still is the world's worst driver. He drives by feel. You have never seen a vehicle that he owns over two or three days that does not have some kind of dent

in it, and when something goes wrong, he'd call, "OK, the battery's dead, Berg. What are you going to do about it?"

So, I'd go there, and I'd jump it.

"Now, where do I go get it fixed?"

"I'll get to it."

And, "Where do I do this? Where do I do that?"

He should not be allowed *ever* for the last forty years to have a driver's license. I mean, terrible, terrible. We'd go out, and I've always just said, "Give me the damn keys, because I don't want to ride with you." Oh, he'd bitch and moan, but then he'd give me his keys, because he is not a good driver. One time he was big on hunting chukar and things like that, so he had about a 1965 International Travel-All. He got tired of having to road hunt and shoot out the windows, so he had his buddy—the guy that did all the construction, John Uhalde—have a platform welded to the front bumper of this vehicle so he could stand and sit up there in front and shoot off the front of it. That went well until the game wardens got a hold of him, and then it had to be removed. I mean, he thought that was a good deal, but you look at every vehicle he's ever had—destroyed, totally destroyed because he didn't care. They didn't mean anything to him. You'd get into it, and there would be about four feet of paper and golf clubs and everything scattered from hell to breakfast. There would be one little spot where he sat, and the rest of it would be cluttered to the roof.

How did his secretaries handle his personality? They'd be exasperated with him. For the last forty years, they'd do anything for him. Totally, completely *anything* he wanted. I mean, they were babysitters. They'd go cash checks for him, they'd get money for him, they'd find his glasses, and get phone numbers for him. He could never remember a phone number, so they'd have to dig it out. Then, on occasion they'd have to go get him his shirts over at the ironing lady. He needed a full-time valet just to pick up after him and take care of him.

Carano was bad, but nothing like Bob. Carano was another one that never seemed to have any money on him in the old days before he got rich and famous with his winery and his hotel. He would forget stuff, but Bob was unique in these ways of just.... As they say, he's like Mr. Magoo. That's a very apt description of Bob.

Don Carano was, in my opinion, the best scrivener and writer of documents of anybody I have met in my forty-five years of practicing law. Very detailed and very thorough, covering everything. Very clear, very legible. I still, on occasion, see documents that he wrote forty years ago, and they're still as good or better than anything we would see today. Bob was a people person. The paperwork was a necessary evil. When they were working together with Incline or had different documents, Bob would probably make the deal or be part of it, and then Don would memorialize it. It was a good match, because, like I say, Bob knew everybody. Don knew a lot of people, but at that time, his knowledge of the populace was a third of Bob's. A lot of the work that we did at that time, or they did, was due to Bob's knowledge and knowing people. He'd know everybody. He knew Art Wood, and he brought him in. Don would do a lot of the negotiations and the lawsuits that Art Wood would get in. Same with Ernie Primm, that Bob would be there talking and negotiating everything, and once the deal was done. They both worked on the Teamsters' pension fund. Later on, all of us got a taste of that. But it was Bob's relationship with the owner of Bally's that got us in there. He just knew everybody, and he was the source of a great deal of our business just because he knew everybody. He was what you would call the marketer, the rainmaker. He would bring them in, and the rest of us would do the work, so it was a very good relationship.

God only knows where he met these people. Every bar in town knew him; every political person knew him. You could go anyplace traveling with Bob McDonald, and he would know someone, whether it was in Boise, Idaho; Dallas,

Texas; or wherever. I don't know how he met them all, but he knew somebody. You could not go anyplace with Bob McDonald, either in the state of Nevada or anyplace else, I guarantee. He would know somebody, either because of World War II, being in the service or—I don't know how he knew them all, but he knew and still knows.... He now can't always remember their names, but if you go into a little bit what they did or something like that, "Oh, yes!" Then he'd tell you a story about them, where he met them, or where they were in a fight in Alaska or on Hawaii or some damn thing.

In the old days he was not allergic to getting into physical arguments. I can remember one time before I was a member of the firm, and I was dating a woman who, as a matter of fact, he introduced me to, who later became my wife. We were at the El Borracho, and Bob had had maybe a drink or two too many. A fellow by the name of Sasha Moloff came in, who Bob *did* not like. I think he's from Lake Tahoe. He said something—and Mary Kay and I were there—and next thing you know, they went outside, and Bob hit him. The guy fell down, hit his face on the curb and broke a tooth, and we separated and went on our way. Pretty quick, two or three months later, John Drendel called Bob up and Sasha Moloff was going to sue him. Bob said, "Well, that's not true. That isn't the case. What it is, he made a pass at Mary Kay, and I was just defending her."

John Squire Drendel said, "That's good enough for me," and that ended the matter. But that was Bob! I mean, if he was in a place—the bar across from their office was the Rumpus Room—he would be in there playing pool or something like that, and there were a couple of problems over the years there. Luckily, I wasn't at any of them, but the rumors are out. And knowing Bob, I am sure he is not afraid of anybody or anything.

In thinking about this, I tried to figure out how to characterize Bob McDonald. For a number of years the *Reader's Digest* used to have a portion of it called "The Most Unforgettable

Person I Know," or something close to that. I would have to say that if anybody were to ask me who's the most unforgettable person I know, it would have to be Bob McDonald due to his interesting love of people, love of animals, love of everything, his caring, and his providing or.... That isn't the right word. The most valuable thing to Bob McDonald, in my opinion, is his reputation. A person loved him or hated him, and 90 percent of the world loves Bob McDonald, and to hell with the other 10 percent. He's been a wonderful partner, a great friend, a good lawyer, and a person that I want to be proud to say, "He's my friend." Thank you.

DON MANOUKIAN

Don Manoukian was born in Merced, California but later moved to Reno, Nevada with his family where he attended and graduated from the “new” Reno High School on Foster Drive. He is a Stanford graduate, played football for the Oakland Raiders in 1960, and after one year, took his athletic talents to the wrestling mat. Don’s skills did not end there, as he was the great campaigner in the 1968 election for Senator Alan Bible. Besides having a real estate business, he serves as a Trustee for Fun Camp, the Nevada non profit organization that Bob McDonald started to send kids to summer camp.

My father was born in Armenia in 1896, and he came to this country just before World War I, looking for his father. He was traveling the world as a young fifteen-year-old man, and he found his father in Boston but then had to leave the country because his tourist visa was only for thirty days. He was what they referred to as “without papers,” thus, the term “wop.” It kind of stuck with the Italian people, but it pertained to many immigrants at the turn of the 20th century. He went back to Marseilles, France, which was his debarkation center and served in World War I as a machinist in Paris in an airplane factory as a young man.

He came back to this country after the war as a French expatriate on a French quota. That’s when the government gave out so many quotas—so many people from each country could come in under pretty carte blanche circumstances—in any event, being an Armenian, he came in fluent in Italian and French, as many of the Europeans and Middle East people are. But not getting too far afield from that, he finally crossed the country, the United States, to Fresno, California, after having worked in the borax mines in Death Valley Junction as a machinist and whatnot. So our family, five children, we were born and raised in the San Joaquin Valley, the bread basket of the United States.

Out of the five children, I was the only one born in a hospital in Merced. I’m in the middle. I have an older brother and sister, and I have a younger brother and sister. Sister Jodie entered San Jose State as a sixteen-year-old and graduated as a nineteen-year-old—very bright girl. She’s alive and well here in Reno. I was born in 1934, and we’re sprinkled all around those particular dates. There is my brother, Milt, the retired attorney, and myself, in the middle; my sister Jackie, who’s married to Roy Powers, a local artist, and was



Bob with Don Manoukian

for twenty-five years the publicity and advertising director for Harolds Club during the heydays. The baby of the family, my brother Noel, was the chief justice of the Nevada State Supreme Court and has had a private law practice, and is now pretty much retired from that and acting as a senior judge. He sits in various jurisdictions where judges have been disqualified or have recused themselves, or if they're ill, or for whatever reason. So that's kind of us.

My dad was a box maker, and he would make packing boxes down in the San Joaquin Valley during the harvest season. For three months, we made, what in those days and by those standards, was a lot of money, but during the winter there was very little work except for some pruning, no irrigating. Very little work. Just very little work. So we would just charge at the gas station, charge at the grocery store. The grocery stores and the gas stations carried more credit than the banks did—at that time it was the Bank of Italy owned

by A.P. Giannini, which was just turning and becoming the Bank of America. Anyway, my dad would travel from Livingston, California, to Sparks, Nevada, and work in the Southern Pacific roundhouse, in the machine shops, in the railroad shops, because of his machinist background. So he'd do that during the winter, and he'd take the old Greyhound bus Sunday afternoon, travel all night on old Highway 40 or 50, whichever provided the best access. Then he'd come back to Livingston, which is approximately a 500-mile round trip. In those days, it was just the old two-lane roads. Of course, Highway 50 still is two-lane, but Highway 80 then also was Highway 40. So finally he said, "My children, this is just too tough on the family: your mother, myself, and you children, too. We have to move up there where I can find steady employment." We moved to Reno, Nevada, in 1950 and 1951.

We finally moved up here after the boys, of course, resisted the move, because we were told that all they played in Nevada was six-man touch football, and if we moved up here, they said, "They're still killing buffalo on the main street, and there's tumbleweeds blowing right down Virginia Street. You guys are going to go up there and never be heard from again! So if you want to look forward to a college career, and if you have any professional aspirations, you better stay here. You better talk your family into staying."

Well, it became an economic necessity that we move, so we did. We've been here since then, and that was 1951 and the big snow. We had never seen snow other than looking up to the Sierra Mountains at a distance from the valley. It's documented that the winter of 1951-1952 was when the City of San Francisco, the passenger train, was marooned up on Donner Summit. It was more snow than we had bargained for, but it was an incredible introduction to the four seasons of the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada.

They had just built a brand new Reno High in 1951, and we had had a little stucco, Spanish-style school down the valley. Couple hundred students—Mexican, Filipino, Japanese—quite a

microcosm of the world, very interesting kids to grow up with—fun to grow up with. We moved up here, and the new high school on Booth Street looked like the Ford Motor Company. It was very antiseptic brick with glass and aluminum frames. I didn't see any pickups or any of the Portuguese kids that were the big dairy people down there in the valley, and I didn't see them with the animal-waste-covered shoes, and I go, "Boy, we've really made a big mistake moving here." But it proved to be, and still is, a wonderful experience. I've had the opportunity to be all over the world and live in different places, but this is where I would pick to live, and it's what I'm doing. I graduated from Reno High School in 1953.

Then I went to Stanford University and graduated from Stanford in 1957 with a history degree and an economics degree. I wrestled professionally for ten years, and I played professional football. My first team was with the San Francisco Forty-Niners in 1958, and I played for the Salinas Packers, a semi-pro team. Then in 1960 was the forming of the American Football League, and I wound up playing with the Oakland Raiders as a charter member—an original member of the Oakland Raider franchise. So I came back to Reno and retired here and retired from the active athletic world. I retired here in about 1967. So I lived here for about two years in high school, went away to college for four, and then went away on the road for about ten. So I had to reintroduce myself when I got back in 1967, because I'd been gone quite a while.

I got my real estate license in 1963. I went to the Graduate School of Business at the University of Hawaii and took some courses that were approved by the state real estate commission, and I was able to take my broker's license while I was still on the road wrestling. Right now is the 44th year that I've had a real estate license.

In 1967 we were recovering locally from the exodus of the military at Stead Army Airbase. There was a glut of housing because the government services had all this unoccupied residential property, these duplexes that the

enlisted men lived in, and the economy was not great. The real estate market was slow, but having not been exposed to the market before, I didn't know the difference. Plus, I had left a background where I was guaranteed so much income, and I left that to come into a business where your only income was based upon commission. So I woke up daily with the motivation of fear in my heart and worked very hard to support my young family at that time. But politics are always the same. They're just different people doing it, just different faces.

I met Bob McDonald one early evening in 1951 when I drove my mother over to his home to baby-sit. Bob's family lived over on Crocker Way at that time, off Circle Drive, and I told Mom, "Let me go to the front door. We don't know these people from a load of coal, and I've got to find out if this is where you want to be, this is where you want to go in and care for these people." So they had one of those Dutch doors at that time, one of those Mister Ed doors where it had two sections to it. The top section was open—Bob's daughter Martha and son Boo were in playing. Bob was in his underwear with a wife-beater shirt on and a cocktail, of course, in his hand, and he was running around getting ready to go to dinner with his wife, Gloria. It was quite hectic, so I went back to the car and told my mother, "These people are a little different, but I think they're OK." So she went in and babysat, and that was the beginning of, so far, a 56-year friendship at this point. God willing, it'll be longer. [laughter]

But to fast forward to 1967, 1968 when I came back to town, I hung my real estate license with Lucini & Associates, an old-line real estate and insurance company that started also as a travel agent early on where the early Granata and Lucini families would bring over, and sponsor Italian immigrants, arrange their portage and find them work here in the Reno area and northern Nevada area. Granata was the uncle to Red Lucini, and Red kind of took over the business and became Lucini & Associates. They were at 220 California

Avenue when I first knew them. That's where the office was, right next to New York Life. At that time it was the beginning of the history of California Street, which, of course, is primarily recognized for the mansions at the west end of it, owned by all the great robber barons and the powerful men that politically formed the state and pushed it forward into the twentieth century.

Bob came to me and said, "Hey, you're kind of a new face, but people know your name, and this is a good opportunity. You're not so deep into your business life yet that you can't take some time off from it. This is going to be a big Republican year. Richard Milhous Nixon will sweep all the Republicans into the White House with him, and my Democratic partner and the great senator of our state, Alan Bible, needs to mount a strong campaign, and we've got to muster all the people that we know and can trust and that are loyal and so forth." So I was appointed the campaign chairman for our senior senator, Alan Bible. Howard Cannon was back there at the time as the other senator, and Walter Baring was the congressman. And we only had enough people in the state—the population was such—that we only had one congressman, but two senators. So I became the campaign manager on Bob's recommendation and urging, and it turned out to be quite a journey, quite an adventure. The personalities.

Bob was a driving force as you know and people have repeated that, but he was a driving force in the state at both ends. When I was in high school, and we played Las Vegas in football for the state championship, we were the larger school. We were the larger community. Now, if you can believe what's happened—one of the incredible phenomena of our generation—is Las Vegas being what it is now. But at that time Bob was behind the scenes—not highly visible except to those in the know and those that felt his support or his adversarial wrath, depending on which side of the table you were sitting—and he was one of the real dedicated Democrats. He'd vote for Jack the Ripper, if he was a Democrat, against Billy

Graham, if Billy was a Republican. [laughter] That's exactly how to put it.

There were challenges within the party, and Bob had to overcome them. And Bob McDonald was an honorable and honest man. He was honest to a flaw. He was too honest. He would speak his mind to anybody in any forum and at any time. He would make very clear where he stood politically, economically, religiously, or any other social issue that came up. He definitely had an opinion, and that's what made Bob, of course, unique. Even the enemy respected Bob. They feared Bob, because he had mounted a real ground swell of support for whatever politician was running.

Real estate people are considered independent contractors, so I just excused myself for that period of time. Red Lucini, the owner of Lucini & Associates—Bob was one of his closest confidants—so certainly that was not a problem, and it was a decision that was very welcome by the office that I work for, because it carried over to them, you know.

I knew the area, of course, and I also had been handpicked by Bob. My first lieutenant and assistant to me was a gentleman named Ed Feutsch. Ed Feutsch was one of the real special people in my life. He was a Tonopah-Goldfield citizen, and around 1910 and 1915 and 1920, Tonopah was the largest community in the state, and if a person came from Goldfield or Tonopah, and when that area fell upon depressed economic times, the young men and women from that community went out throughout the state: Ely, Elko, Winnemucca, Lovelock, Reno.

With Ed at my side, we knew every human in the state, or certainly had the entrée or access to anybody we needed to see, and that was invaluable to Senator Bible, because, though he represented the State of Nevada, he spent his life and home back East in Washington, D.C. It was a real natural combination because Ed knew the older group, and I had the entrée to the younger group and had some name recognition—my brothers and sisters were recognizable in the

community and were generally looked upon as good people.

Since I was a little bit of a celebrity in a small-town sense—having had the exposure through TV wrestling and then national football, and having gone away to college and keeping up some relationships here—it was kind of a natural thing. The campaigning we did was quite primitive compared to what one sees today. Television was a big deal then. We'd go to a studio, make a tape of whatever speech, and we thought we were campaigning. And we would go from bar to bar, store to store, business to business and put up 18-by-24 placards, "Vote for Alan Bible," so forth and whatever.

The campaign headquarters were on Center Street, and it was the part of a building owned by—God bless him—an old Basco attorney that passed away, Pete Echeverria, formerly an Ely butcher, who decided to go to law school and became a great one. In fact, he even had a finger missing from having cut meat. That was his claim to fame. That was his blue-collar status symbol, the missing finger. Yes, it was right there just south of Stewart Street. Stewart Street was the cross street, one block east of Virginia. Yes, it was a busy place. I recall the colors of the campaign were blue and green, but I'm colorblind.

One of the interesting individuals—Bob had gotten a call from Hong Kong, and there was an old gambler, who would play cards and win at any cost, and he got caught not playing fairly. He was an American who had gone over there and had been involved in some pretty big games and had won a lot of money from various individuals that were very easy pickings for him, and he was going to prison. The people that he had taken advantage of in the card games had pressed charges, and, of course, an American cheating at cards in Hong Kong is not the place to be. So he's going to a Chinese prison. They call Bob, and through Bob's efforts—that shall remain non-described—gets the guy off, gets him out of the country, back into the United States. This individual comes back to the United States—he

was probably a fifty-year-old man. He was originally from Texas, but spent a lot of time in Nevada. Since gambling was legal, it was like robbing banks was OK. So he shows up in the campaign office with Bob and this gambler's son, who is about twenty-one, twenty-two years old, who was a prestidigitator. He was like a magician with cards. The twenty-one-year-old was incredible.

So the gambler, who had been saved from the Chinese prison, comes in and volunteers his son on a gratis basis for the remainder of the campaign. So the kid comes in—these were real tough guys as they came from a real different background and says, "OK, I'm here to help. When do we start tearing down the other guy's signs?" He thought, since that's how they did it in Texas where he came from, that's what his job was going to be. [laughter] He wanted to tear down all the Ed Fike signs that he saw in order to help Senator Bible. After convincing him that that's not the way we were going to do it, he became quite helpful, quite industrious. And he flew his own plane. This kid had his own plane. He'd had a card game set up in Medford, Oregon, and he wanted me to fly up with him—this is in the middle of the campaign—and sit in on the poker game. I said, "I don't gamble in those kinds of situations, and it's a little bit sketchy. Who are these people? What's their background?"

He didn't know them other than they all had a lot of money, and they liked to gamble. He said, "All you've got to do is come up there, take your seat at the table, and all you got to do is sit there and raise. Just keep raising. You don't have to have good cards. You don't have to know anything about gaming. Just keep raising! Get that pot as big as you can get it, because I'll win it. I'll win it." We were the beneficiaries of Bob's efforts in saving the gambler from the Hong Kong prison.

Las Vegas was coming up close behind in population. They were certainly to be reckoned with. You had to spend time in Las Vegas. In the 1960s it started surpassing Reno. My title was "Campaign Chairman for Northern Nevada,"

and, of course, I was pretty much a figurehead because we had the brain trusts and the experts from Washington and the publicity directors and advertising people from Reno and Las Vegas. I was just kind of an instrument out there that walked around and bought people drinks, put up placards, and organized the workers. It was more an administrative thing having to do with personnel, getting the signs out, making sure they stayed up, contacting the people, making a few speeches on the senator's behalf, talking to the college kids, where we got a lot of help because of the liberal Democratic mentality of the college kid at that time—which Bob's daughter, Martha, was one of. She worked for me. There were a lot of great kids in 1968. Those kids that were twenty years old then, they're sixty now. Like my dad would say, "Time is a thief. It steals your youth."

Bob has been young at heart—still is young at heart. Great, great approach to life. St. Patrick's Day, those are the great days. He and his buddy, Pat Brady, were well-known for their excursions on St. Patrick's Day, and when the Little Waldorf was down on Virginia Street by Welsh's bakery, which is now the Eldorado Hotel, the great Irish story, of course, was: Bob and Brady, with a broom and a five-gallon bucket of paint—green, of course—painting the white line down Virginia Street green on St. Patrick's Day, after having acquired an extra bit of courage from the Little Waldorf. Yes, that was one of the memorable sights. [laughter] Memorable sights.

I reported pretty much to Bob, who was here all the time, and Jack Carpenter, who was Senator Alan Bible's administrative assistant. We had a birthday party a couple years ago for Jack, and it was his ninetieth birthday. So Jack now, I believe, is ninety-three, doing pretty well. Still got the old Kentucky general air about him—wonderful storyteller. He knew so many things about Washington. Wound up as the National Mining Congress lobbyist back there. Jack was a wonderful assistant.

There were our great trips down to Las Vegas. Jack and I would go down there for fundraising

efforts. When we'd go to Las Vegas during the campaign, that was always a big deal. We'd go to the Mint. Yes, we just had a storybook time. The old-time gamblers—we talked about campaign contributions—I don't remember all the rules and regulations and the legislation that controlled contributions, but it was different then than it is now. But we raised a lot of money.

You see, at that time and probably today, too—I haven't been involved in any—we had to pay up front for our TV, because they figured that if a candidate that got into them for his TV ads, and he doesn't go forward, doesn't win, they could forget that bill. So we'd prepay all that, and there was a time when we had to counter a big rumor that someone had started about the senator. It had to be immediately addressed.

The rumor had to do with voting on some special-interest legislation—obviously, something to do with mining or oil or airlines. Transportation—that was always a big issue, and Bible worked closely with Howard Cannon. The saying in the old days in Washington was, "If the Bible doesn't work, we'll use the Cannon." So Cannon, of course, was the head of the transportation committee. He was a very heavy-duty guy. This was a big deal, and we had to raise some money. We desperately needed it by the end of the day.

An individual, who will remain anonymous, went to his trust account, unbeknownst to the good Senator Bible. Bible would have had a heart attack! He would have gotten completely frantic. This individual goes to a special account that was not his, but he had access to it, extracted a large sum of money, and paid for the advertising before sundown. Saved the slot on TV, and we got the TV ads on that we needed to. Of course, the money was repaid to that particular account that it shouldn't have come out of. Great stories like that. I guess maybe some day down the road somebody told Alan Bible what happened, but it wasn't me. I can assure you I never brought it up. That story might have been told to him at one time, but he was the beneficiary of what

happened. But he would absolutely not have condoned it.

In those days, you know, they talked about all the influence in Las Vegas that was criminally backed, and that many of these gamers were of questionable reputes and backgrounds, but like my dad would say, “Well, you know, they don’t teach that class in college. Where the hell do you think these guys are going to learn it? They learn it in the streets.”

They didn’t have a class for running a casino. There were no classes. There was nothing on TV like now—poker championships. They’re teaching us all the rules and how to play, how to raise and how to check. In those days, we got characters from back East—Kansas City, Detroit—and they’d come out here, and as they came into Nevada and crossed that imaginary state line, they became regular, legal citizens because gaming is legal here. So those were the characters involved, and most of them came from union backgrounds. Generally speaking, the unions are Democratically driven. Those are the individuals with whom you would meet and make your case.

So they all became legitimate here. Fitz, that’s a whole other story. Yes, Fitz got shot at and never came out of his casino for years. Had a condominium upstairs, lived there with his security people. Yes, he never came out of the Nevada Club.

Benny Binion was the patriarch of the Binion family. We’re more familiar with Ted, the druggie, alcoholic, so forth and whatever, the son that got killed by his girlfriend, and her boyfriend. All the silver coins that they stole and whatnot were buried out there by Pahrump somewhere, and they dug them up, and it was a long, long involved issue. Well, of course, where did this money come from? I mean, I don’t think the IRS ever got a fair shake on where that money came from. In the old days, back to the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, they didn’t have the counting rooms and the controls that they do today in gaming. And we have to remember, then, there weren’t any real corporations licensed until Howard Hughes came

in, and they licensed the corporation or corporate entities. Otherwise, they were individually or family-owned businesses, the casinos.

The kid probably collected them, too, over the years working in the casino. There are some wealthy people today here in Reno that started out working in the counting rooms and the counting cages and the change cages in the casinos. I’m not suggesting that they stole the money. I’m saying that if a bunch of good-looking coins came in, they would take the coins and put back paper money out of their pocket, so there was nothing missing. But they understood the value of the coins, and they knew that in time the wonderful, wonderful investment that coins were.

But Benny would make us eat that Texas chili, and with that Texas chili, we always said, you could strip floor wax off a kitchen floor with it. It was just pretty fierce stuff. They’re quite macho, those Texas boys, and they figured if it was really hot, and it burned your mouth and throat, it had to be good chili. Then when I thought I was through and couldn’t eat anymore, he’d bring out one of those big porterhouse steaks, and we’d have to sit there and visit with him—as famous as he was, and as well-known as he was.

We’re in a favorite corner in the restaurant, yes, like a little private room off to the side. We’d sit there, and we’re always waiting for the other shoe to drop. He would inevitably say, “Well, how much do you need this time? How much do you need this time?” He would always be very generous, and he’d wrap it up like in a napkin. He’d throw you a napkin, and he would have whatever number of hundred-dollar bills wrapped up in this big napkin, and we’d wind up with a napkin full of stacks of money—and heartburn. [laughter] Money and heartburn. Yes, Benny was a beauty, and he was a great talker. Wonderful, wonderful character. He’s the one that started those big poker tournaments. He’s probably the guy that’s responsible at least for the embryonic stages of poker being accepted virtually as a spectator sport. He would have those big, big

poker tournaments. He had them before everybody else. Everybody else had poker, and they had poker games, but not these big tournaments.

I was always basically frugal, and I would play one or two times a year, play a little twenty-one, and I was basically lucky. I would win quite easily. Maybe more than a couple of times a year I'd gamble. But there's something about ill-gotten gains from gaming, and a guy winds up, of course, late at night enjoying the evening and having plenty of cocktails, and wind up tipping those large-breasted dealers. And I'd hear of their husbands that have left them, and now they're stuck with the children, and, geez, pretty soon I've got tears big as sewer lids, and I'm tipping them those twenty-dollar bills. I feel very, very bad about their life, and then I feel way too guilty about my life—I don't gamble a lot.

I never saw Jack [Carpenter] gamble. I saw him have a few cocktails, and he'd smoke that pipe. He was a deep thinker, contrary to a lot of his mannerisms, but he was very deliberate, and he would not act in haste and repent in leisure. He would invariably take his time, and there would be advisors, publicity directors, et cetera, in the midst of a crisis situation, and Jack never missed a beat. He never disappointed. His personality, blood pressure, delivery, all the same, and he would come up invariably with a thought that, like all good thoughts, they would seem very obvious after they're explained, "For heaven's sake, why didn't we think of that? Geez, it was right there in front of us!" But he had that ability. He could see the forest for the trees. He knew how. He understood more than.... He was like a good wrestler. A good wrestler just isn't thinking about the next move he's going to make. He has two or three moves lined up in his head. He knows what his second and third move is going to be. That's kind of what Jack would do. And he knew Washington. He had the heartbeat of politics. He understood it. It's like a lot of good golfers. You see great players out there, great swings. Picture

it, but they don't understand the game. They don't really know the game.

For ninety-three, going on ninety-four, his recall is just excellent, and he can remember wonderful stories. What's great about him, he'll talk about things just like we talk about the weather or the Nevada basketball team or football team, very off the cuff, and he'll talk about the Kennedys. He'll talk about Lyndon Baines Johnson; he'll talk about Jimmy Carter. He says, "I remember one time the president called me."

We'll go, "Which one?"

He'd say, "Carter."

And he's just going on in a story and doesn't embellish the fact that he knew the president. He's working towards the point of the story, and these other people just happen to be involved on the fringes, and that included the attorney general or the vice president or whoever was there at the time. It was just people he worked with every day. He had the ability to change gears. I mean, he could go from business to pleasure more seamlessly than anybody I knew. He was wonderful.

There are two events that were really interesting. We're talking about relativity of today's style and methodology of presenting a candidate and running a campaign and the past way. Ed Feutsch, Jack Carpenter, and I would run around with a bunch of twenty-dollar bills in our pockets and go into a bar and buy a round of drinks or two and got permission to put up a couple of placards in the window, "Vote for Bible," so forth and whatever. We were out in Sun Valley, Nevada, a blue-collar community, and it was the old Sun Valley Bar. It's still there. I don't know how it's remained upright all these years. It already had a bunch of cars around there. So we pull in, and we're buying drinks, having a few laughs, and put up a bunch of placards and announce. Everybody guaranteed their support for Alan Bible. We go out, and out of the fifteen or twenty cars that were out there, they were all from Arizona, Oregon, New Mexico and Wyoming. I don't think

in the whole bar there was one registered voter. Not one registered voter.

The other incident happened when we were in Las Vegas with Carpenter, and we kept entertaining various contributors that were coming up with any amount, large and small amounts, to support the senator. As the night really got late... these were the days where we'd sit there and we'd watch... Marty Robbins was a young singer at the time. Elvis Presley was a young entertainer at the time. Elvis, of course, was pretty established. Of course, Elvis was established as soon as he became known. But we'd stay up all night and watch these characters. Those were the years of the Rat Pack with Dean Martin and Sammy Davis and that crew. So we would sometimes allow ourselves to be overserved, and we would go to bed in the wee hours. I remember one time Senator Bible called the room. I was sharing a room with Jack Carpenter, and he grabs the phone in a stupor. Senator Bible was very anxious to get ahold of the attorney general. So Carpenter says, "I'll get ahold of Harvey right away." He was referring to Harvey Dickerson, the state of Nevada attorney general, and Bible screamed at him, which he seldom did. He said, "Not that one, you damn fool! The one in Washington, D.C.!"

So Carpenter jumped straight up in bed and started to walk to the closet, which happened to be a wall. He's walking on the bed. It was a great athletic move. I never in my life saw anybody... looked like he was on a trampoline. From a seated position he's standing, and why he was walking on top of the mattress instead of the floor is something I have never understood. As he walked to the headboard, his face ran right into the wall. He came hurdling backwards and, amazingly, did not kill himself. Got himself dressed. [laughter] I'm watching this from the corner of the room in a prone position. I'm watching all this going on, and I'm going, "God, this guy's a trick. This guy looks like one of those Chinese gymnasts." [laughter] The great Carp.

It was about a six-month experience. It was all of six months, and I traveled the state. I would go with the senator to Las Vegas and go to Elko. I'll never forget—we were in Elko during one of the festivals. They had the Basque woodchoppers, and they had the Basco strongmen that would take this ball, which was a stone, and they would lift the stone up to their shoulder from the ground. So, of course, somebody wants to acknowledge me, an athlete in the crowd associated with Alan Bible. They're trying to help Bible by getting his name mentioned properly and instead of just blurting it out, "Here's Don Manoukian, Senator Alan Bible's campaign manager in northern Nevada. He will now compete in lifting the stone." Well, this is a very awkward thing to do, and I never did it in my life. Fortunately, through embarrassment and fear, I grab it and I hoist it up to my shoulder and then put it down like I did it all the time, but I'm sure I could not have done it a second time. Alan Bible comes up, congratulates me and whatnot, and we're walking around. Some people are coming towards us, and they yell my name. They say, "Manoukian!" So Senator Bible turns to me, and out of the corner of his mouth says, "What are their names?" So he wanted to acknowledge them by their names and make them feel comfortable with him. I said, "I can't remember their names."

He looks at me and says, "What the hell do I have you around me for?" Oh, God! My bad back and all from hoisting the stone. [laughter]

Another time we stayed overnight in Las Vegas at a big cocktail party. We had it at the International Hotel. It had just been built by Kirk Kerkorian, one of my countrymen.

Kirk was an interesting character. I'd met him over in Hawaii when he inaugurated the first flight of the Trans-International Airlines. I was on the beach. I was over there wrestling at the time. This was about 1959. The gentleman comes down to the beach and approaches me, and this guy is fully dressed—got a suit, tie, the whole deal, a real L.A.-looking guy. He says, "There's someone that



Don Manoukian competing in a weightlifting contest at the 1968 Basque Festival in Elko, Nevada.

would like to see you up in the penthouse,” right there in front of the Ala-Moana Hotel. I mean, this looked like some kind of a scam, but I go up and look, and behold, it’s Kirk Kerkorian. He’d just flown over there with George Raft, Mitzi Gaynor, the actress, Cyd Charise, on and on and on, and all these people are in this room. So this is when I met the guy for the first time. He says, “Well, I read the paper, and it said you were wrestling over here. I saw your last name, and I recognized it was an Armenian name and wanted to meet you.”

So years later, here we are. The guy just built the new International Hotel. He later became this major stockholder in the MGM, Chrysler, as you know. So we had a big cocktail party there. Wonderful party. It raised the senator a great deal of money. It was great fun. But that’s when Las Vegas really started to go with the big high-rises, and the big money started pouring in, other than the Teamster money. The Teamster money was there early on.

After that great cocktail party, the next morning we fly back to Reno, because there was

a big parade. It was like a Labor Day Parade or one of the big events that was a big deal—could have even been the Fourth of July, but the senator had to figure out a way to get back, because the planes were all jammed. Things were all fouled up. So Howard Cannon flew his own plane, and he goes out to the Thunderbird Airport, which is in the north end of town in Las Vegas, the opposite side of town from McCarran Field, and he flew back to Reno, no sweat. He had taken Walter Baring with him. Well, we had missed that hookup and missed that connection. In any event, we get the senator on a commercial flight. I get back to Reno before anybody else does for whatever reason, but who’s already sitting in Alan Bible’s convertible, the best-looking car in the whole parade? It was Walter Baring. He had walked in and got in Bible’s car. [laughter] Had the premier spot in the parade, the premier vehicle in the parade. The senator comes back to town. He’s got to be in some obscure Chevy convertible, while in the big Cadillac is Walter Baring. And though there was certain respect that Alan had for Walter Baring, he was not his favorite, so to

see him in Alan's vehicle was a little disturbing, and we were the beneficiaries of Senator Bible's seldom-seen wrath. But he did have some great parades. The little towns were always fun.

Churchill County—he was well-known in Fallon. He grew up in Fallon. He was the D.A. over in that county, and I think he was the D.A. up in Virginia City, also. He'd been around a great deal. He had some early law partners here in Reno. Then, of course, he later became partners with Bob, and then Don Carano, the patriarch of the Carano family of Eldorado Hotel and Silver Legacy fame, and winery fame. So it was Bible, McDonald, Carano, and then later, of course Spike Wilson became a partner in the law firm.

I'm still a Democrat. Yes, I'm a registered Democrat. Like most Nevadans, we vote the individual, but we're registered Democrat. My involvement in politics kind of tapered off. I helped a couple of individuals after that probably into the 1970s. Maybe for another ten years I was kind of involved.

I was involved in O'Callaghan's campaign, as a matter of fact, I was, at Bob's urging, and as a reward for Mike being the long shot and winding up as governor, to demonstrate his sincerity and thankfulness and appreciation, he appointed me to the parole board. After about six months on that parole board, I got ahold of O'Callaghan, and I said, "Mike, this is absolutely the worst experience of my life. Most of the guys I see in there are people I know, at least the ones from northern Nevada. They're there in prison, and I've got to decide their fate, or help decide it." And my brothers were young attorneys at the time, and they were taking whatever cases were available to pay the rent and keep food on the table. So they would represent many of these criminals. I said, "This is no fun at all. I've got to disqualify myself or recuse myself, and it's terrible. I don't like it."

So O'Callaghan says, "Well, I tell you what, you're not getting off until you find someone to take your place."

So it just happened a couple of weeks after I had that meeting with Governor O'Callaghan, that I read the paper, and it said, "Jake Lawlor Retiring as Athletic Director and Coach at the University of Nevada, Reno."

So I said, "There's my pigeon. There's my way out." So I approach Jake and tell him that an idle mind is the devil's playground and he needs to do something other than drink beer. So he thought that was a great idea. So, yes, that was a long explanation on, yes, I did help Mike O'Callaghan. He thought he was helping me, but it was horrible, and I had to extricate myself from that situation by talking my friend, old Jake Lawlor, into substituting for me.

I knew Mike pretty well, and later on after his retirement from office, I was spending more time in Las Vegas in the real estate and building business, and Mike had gone into the newspaper business by then. Mike was very much a survivor, very much had the pulse on the community. He had that air about him, the old Korean War veteran, and never pleaded his case, never whimpered, went onward and upward in spite of being an amputee. He had a great feel for people, and he was the working man's hero. Then later, he worked his way up in the newspaper, the Las Vegas Sun. He worked for Hank Greenspun, and then later became the editor of the Henderson paper, which, of course, was owned by the same family. But Mike was a very, very memorable guy. I liked Mike. Mike would be considered a good friend. His wife was an interesting gal. I enjoyed her a lot.

My career locally, business-wise, and professionally was enhanced because of Bob. He was a legal, economic, and social source, a wealthy source of information for me. He introduced me to my banker, who was the banker at that time, Bob Sullivan at Valley Bank, who still remains a good friend. Everybody that we did business with and everybody that we spent time with and were on different committees with—and them with one another, also, not just myself—we've all remained friends and kept up the association. We

don't see each other as frequently as we like, but nobody gets to do...., as time goes on, you think you have more time to relax and do.... Life gets busier. If a guy wants to just drop out of society, he can spend all the time he wants reading a book or writing a story, but if he's out and about and doing things, a guy is busy. Today the big difference is that no one works part time. We're either in business, or we're not. Before, a guy could do it. There wasn't the competition that we have now. Computers have made it competitive. There's a guy that can't carry on a conversation, but he's a whiz kid on the computer, and he's a force to be reckoned with. He has access to knowledge. Like myself, I still keep books in a Roi-Tan cigar box. I hate computers. Hate them! But I'm now learning to use a computer at some modest level. That's the big difference. For guys like Bob, they say, "If you want a big funeral, you got to die young." I go to funerals now where there have been some great, great builders of our community. They're in their nineties, and the only people that are there are the people that remember them and are almost the same age. Those old-timers like him have a great deal to contribute. I'll be seventy-three this June, and I'm still learning every day, and I look to those older veterans to impart some of their wisdom to me. I'm still willing to accept it.

JOHN FRANKOVICH

John Frankovich joined McDonald Carano Wilson LLP in 1973 and is now the Managing Partner. He cut his teeth on a couple of big clients, Incline Village General Improvement District, Bally Manufacturing, and a man named Ted Jennings. John's father, Lee Frankovich, worked in Elko, Nevada, for Newt Crumley and followed him to Reno when he opened the Holiday Casino. Even after having had some fishing adventures with Bob McDonald, he still enjoys the sport.

I was the first of the baby boomers, born in 1946, right after the war, in Bakersfield, California because my father was stationed on a base there, and when I was about six months old, we moved to Elko, Nevada. My father had met a gentleman by the name of Newt Crumley in the service during the war, and Newt owned two casinos in Elko, Nevada, called the Ranch Inn and the Commercial, which are still there today. My father had been involved in getting entertainment for the troops during the war, and therefore had a lot of connections with entertainment so that's what he did in Elko; he was a general manager of the hotels, and they started bringing fairly big-time entertainment into the state of Nevada for the very first time in the late 1940s and early to

mid-1950s, people like Jimmy Durante and Joe E. Lewis and Rosemary Clooney. Bing Crosby had a ranch, actually, in Elko and became close friends with my father and our family. There was a lot of interesting entertainment, and it was really the beginning of big-time entertainment in the state of Nevada. In those days, Las Vegas was almost unheard of compared to what it is today.

I went to elementary school in Elko, but we moved to Reno in 1955. I was nine years old. Then I went to school at Mount Rose Elementary School, Billingshurst Junior High School, and Reno High School. I graduated from Reno High School in 1964. I went to the United States Naval Academy for two years, left there, transferred to Stanford University, and graduated with a degree in mathematics in 1968. I went to law school at UCLA and got my law degree in 1971.

My family has a long history at UCLA. My father and mother both went and graduated there in 1938. That's where they met, and they got married in 1940. My father was an athlete, and he was captain of the football team, and also played baseball while my uncle was one of the famous football players at UCLA. His name was Mike Frankovich, my father's older brother, and he



John Frankovich

became a very prominent movie producer in southern California. So my father's family has always been somewhat connected, starting with his generation, in the entertainment business, and that's the atmosphere that I grew up in. We saw every show that ever came to the state of Nevada for probably twenty years. My father worked at a number of places in northern Nevada. He worked at Harrah's for a while. He worked at the Holiday Hotel when Newt Crumley moved here. He was the general manager of the Nugget under Dick Graves and then John Ascuaga in the early to mid-1960s. Eventually, he ended up at Harvey's at Lake Tahoe for an extended period of time. When he retired from Harvey's and moved back to Reno, he worked as the entertainment director for the Eldorado in Reno for a number of years, too.

I grew up in Reno, but I saw a lot of different places during college, and it never occurred to me to live anywhere else. I loved Reno, and always had planned on coming back. I spent three years in Los Angeles going to law school and had some opportunities there, but it was just not a place that I ever wanted to live. I just decided I was going to come back to Reno.

I took the Nevada Bar and went to work for the Washoe County District Attorney's office. At that time, Bob Rose, who retired as a Supreme Court Justice, was the District Attorney. We had a very good office at that time and had three other people that became District Attorneys, including Larry Hicks, Mills Lane, and Cal Dunlap. We had a real good group of lawyers there, and it was a fun period of time. I was only there for two years, but it was during that period of time I met Don Carano. Don was representing the developers up at Incline, because he and the law firm, including Bob, were very active in the development of Incline Village. I had a number of dealings with Don over issues that the Incline developers had with the county because Incline is in Washoe County.

I had not met Don before, but I had known Bob since I was a young kid. I was a member of the Reno Falcons, and Bob was one of the founding fathers of the Falcons ski team, and he used to go on the trips as one of the chaperones, if you can imagine Bob being a chaperone—we had a good time on those trips. That was in the mid-to-late 1950s when we had the Falcons Ski Team, and the coach was a guy named Gordy Wren. Bob was one of the people that were involved with the founding of it, so I'd known him for a long period of time, but since the ski team and high school, I hadn't really had much contact with him until I started dealing with Don Carano at the District Attorney's office.

After two years, they made me an offer to come join the law firm, and I sat down and talked to them and made the decision and came here and have been here ever since. That was 1973. It's been thirty-four years almost.

At that time there were six of us, and there were only six for a long period of time. There was Bob McDonald, Don Carano, Spike Wilson, Leo Bergin, Paul Bible, and me. That was it. I was the young guy for quite a while in the law firm. Mike O'Callaghan was the governor, and, of course, Bob, and to a lesser degree Don, but certainly Bob, had been instrumental in not only the discovery, but the election of Mike O'Callaghan to governor of the state of Nevada, and they were close, close friends. I would say that they spoke certainly weekly, if not daily, during the period of time that O'Callaghan was governor. So the law firm was well-connected politically, had a lot of very prominent clients, did a lot of gaming work, and did a lot of real estate development work.

We represented the original developers of Incline Village, and that evolved into being Boise Cascade when I got there. It was Art Wood and some other people originally, but Boise Cascade had bought them out, so when I came on board, Boise Cascade was one of our big clients.

We also represented the pension fund of the Teamsters union, which in those days in the 1970s was one of the few sources of financing available for the casino industry in the state of Nevada. There was no gaming outside the state of Nevada, and it was not well-recognized nationally. It was not thought to be a suitable investment for the big banks—they didn't want to be affiliated with gaming in those days—so there were very few sources of financing. One of the major sources in the state of Nevada was the pension fund of the Teamsters union, and we started to represent them in that period of time, throughout the 1970s. When they made loans to various casinos in Nevada, we would handle the loan transaction, and if there were problems with the loans, we would pursue the remedies on the loans, too. So that was one of our major clients in those days.

That's one of the stories about Bob that was funny. There was one particular representative of the pension fund that we dealt with quite a lot, and he was not an easy guy to get along with. I

mean, he was a good businessman, but he was what you'd imagine as somebody for the pension fund. He was very crude in his speech, very abrasive, and very aggressive. We represented him and subsequently, he got into trouble. Bob would always say, "I don't remember." He never knew him, which, of course, was part of his selective memory, but it was one of these tools he used, because when we'd sit down and talk about him, Bob would say, "I never dealt with him." [laughter] So some of the people we dealt with in those days were colorful people, I'd say that, very colorful.

Ernie Primm was one of our clients. He was one of the real old characters, and he was a long-time friend, of course, with Bob, and they went way back. Bob helped him when they got the red line changed in Reno. They used to have just gaming in a very limited area, and Bob and Ernie got it changed to help Ernie Primm create the Primadonna, and he was in our office all the time. He used to have a toupee which was taped on his head with Scotch tape. [laughter] Sometimes it was askew, as they say. He'd come in and talk to Bob. He would like to get politically active, too, but in those days, we didn't have all the accounting for a political contribution. He'd often make substantial contributions in cash, and he'd sometimes have Bob help him, "Who should I support?" because Bob's always been very, very active politically as a Democrat—born, bred, and will die a Democrat. I accuse him of never voting for a Republican, and he denies it, but he can't name one that he ever supported, let's say that.

We were politically active, and we had a lot of good connections that helped us do business. Bob and Don were very good at getting clients and worked at a very high level. Spike Wilson, at the time, was a state senator. He spent a lot of time in the legislature, and because of that, a lot of the technical legal work fell to Leo Bergin, Paul Bible, and me. Oh, we had a good group, and we had a lot of fun for a long period of time, and we're still having a lot of fun times.

Bob and Don have an extremely close relationship, and it developed at the beginning of the firm. I was not around during that probably ten-year period. In the beginning, there were very few lawyers. There was just Bob and Don, and I think Dyer Jensen was involved for a while. But those were the days when they were struggling to get their law practice started and did a lot of divorce business and had some very interesting and fun clients. They grew to have a very, very close bond, and they have been forever friends—either one would do anything for the other one—that was always their relationship. They don't always agree, and they will argue and fight, but at the end of the day, they are almost like brothers. When they worked together, they went back and forth into each other's offices. When I started with the firm, we'd just moved into the new building at 241 Ridge Street, which we just moved out of two years ago. We were there over thirty years. It was a brand new building, and their offices were right next to each other. Yes, there was a lot of time going back and forth, although by the end of the 1970s, Don had started the Eldorado. The Eldorado had become very successful, and he would spend less and less time in the office. By the 1980s, he was not actively practicing much anymore, although he's still been, and still is, very closely affiliated with the law firm and with Bob.

Bob's style was that he knew everybody, and he could call up anybody on the phone and get something done, or if you needed an appointment with somebody in government, or even with the court or a judge, Bob could arrange it. Bob was not a technical tactician in the law. He would have the big picture, but he wasn't going to write the brief, and he wasn't going to go to court and argue the case. But he would have a lot of input into the strategy: obtaining the client, obtaining the case, and what the client needed to get done. He would also follow through to make sure that whoever was supposed to be doing the work was doing it. He's very impatient, and if he has a

project, he'll bug me about it all the time, which is good.

Don, on the other hand, was very, very good in real estate. He knew real estate, and he knew how to do deals. He did a lot of deals, and he was what I'd call a closer. He wanted to make sure the deal went and was willing to make the compromises necessary. Some lawyers will screw up deals and are not closers. Don was very good at that, and he was very proficient with real estate. He learned about financing and how transactions are financed through his relationship not only with real estate and some of the developers but with the pension fund, and he evolved and used that when he went into his own investments, which, of course, are considerable at this point in time. But his base was the start in the legal business. When he started with Bob, he had very little, and he and a lot of people have been very successful because of their relationship with Bob.

Spike has a very different style. He is not a rough-and-tumble guy. He's very polished, very well-spoken, one of the finest lawyers ever in the state of Nevada. He speaks eloquently, and when he does speak, he can persuade you of anything in a relatively short period of time. He tried and was involved in a lot of very, very high-profile cases—still is.

He represented the Lears in a major case that came down where there was a contest over the rights to the Lear jet after Bill Lear died. They had to try that in Chicago, and that went on for months with a very, very successful result. He was mainly a litigator, although he was politically active, and he'd disappear for four months at a time when the legislature came into session. He was extremely ethical, always uncomfortable with the existence and utilization of political connections. He would disdain that and have no problem with taking positions that maybe the other lawyers in the office didn't agree with, if he felt they were the right ones. He was totally honorable, and again, a very, very close relationship with Bob.

When I first started with the firm, whatever the revenues were, everybody would cut them up equally. It didn't matter who was doing what, which was kind of unusual. Most firms, when they have senior people, the senior people usually get more than the junior people. That's not the way it was when I started. It has changed since then, because we've gotten so big and grown so much. But there was a real camaraderie among that group, and I think that that's part of it—they were all working together for the same cause so they split up the money equally, and everybody shared in everybody's successes and failures, and because of that, I think that there's still a close bond between that group, certainly McDonald, Carano, Wilson, and Bergin. They go way back.

Well, Leo's had his own niche. He's always been off on his own, doing his own thing, and, of course, with the help of Don, he became closely involved with the Italian community, and he does all the work for all the Italian landowners to this day in Washoe County. He grew up in Fallon and always had an interest in farming, so he was not the go-to-court guy, but he was a guy that, once again, did real estate deals. He knew all about real estate, knew all about title work, and could put together a deal and close a deal, and did that for, as I say, many, many of the Italian families which dominate Washoe County. Between the Italians and the Irish, it used to be about 90 percent of our community. Not anymore, but the Italians still had all the land. Leo was quiet, worked on his own, but was very effective and a totally dedicated and loyal member of the team, and still is. He's been here since about 1970. When I first interviewed—I didn't even interview with Leo—he was in the basement of the building on Court Street, with the wedding chapel, I think, on top, which was the first office when there was only the five of them. As I say, we'd just moved into a new building when I joined the firm, which was a big step up, and we've taken another step up moving over here [to...] just a couple years ago.

Bob had friends in all sectors of the community and at all social and economic levels. I mean, everybody that he ever ran into was a friend of Bob. He had that ability. He worked with Alan Bible, and, of course, the firm was started by Alan Bible and Bob way back in 1949, I believe it was, and because of that he had political connections at the highest level. He still has in his office a picture of him with President Lyndon Johnson, sitting there talking with Lyndon Johnson and Alan Bible. He knew people all the way at that level, but he also knew everybody that worked in every casino and every bar and every restaurant in Reno. Wherever he went they knew him, and he's a friend to everybody. He just had that way about him.

There was a whole array of people that would come in and out of his office. His philosophy generally was that he would always want to help the little guy. He never turned down a case regardless of whether it was going to be economical or not, with the firm belief that if you helped them today, and they had a bigger problem tomorrow, they'd come back, and you could help them and come out better financially down the line, because he never would want to turn anybody away that he thought he could help. There were a lot of very different kinds of people that would come in and out of Bob's office, including some very prominent characters. Of course, when he was affiliated with Mike O'Callaghan, there was a regular group—Jack Carpenter and Brady. Pat Brady was in and out a lot. Oh, another one that was in a lot in those days was Al Ferrari. Al owned the Holiday Hotel at the time and was in and out. We did a lot of work for Al. He also had that Red Top Inn in California—I don't know what's there now; it's a big development—but Al Ferrari was one of the good clients that would show up. As I said, when they're a client, they're a friend. Al Conton, another one that would show up a lot, and Don Baldwin was starting the Warehouse Markets in



Pat Brady and Bob after a morning duck hunt in Colusa, C.A.

those days and now is in the casino industry. [Don has since sold out of Baldini's.] One of his closest friends, who he would talk to frequently, is Bob Sullivan, who at the time was president of the Valley Bank here, which was one of the original local banks. They actually came out of Utah, I believe, but it was one of the banks that everybody used in Nevada. Bob McDonald was actually on the board of directors of Valley Bank for a long time, and he would go to those meetings. When we had issues with clients and needed financing in the state of Nevada, in those days we usually would send them to Valley Bank.

Subsequently, after Ernie Primm died, his family would frequently come in. Other lawyers over time have evolved into representing these as Bob became less and less active in the practice, but they could always call Bob, and if they weren't happy with what was going on, Bob would make sure he'd let everybody know what they had to do, and you had to get it done.

One of our big clients, and maybe our biggest that we ever had, certainly during the 1970s and 1980s, was Bally Manufacturing. They made slot machines, and they were based out of Chicago. Their president at the time was a fellow named Bill O'Donnell, who became very, very close with Bob and Don both over the years. They had their issues and their backgrounds in Chicago, and they wanted to get licensed in the state of Nevada—a gaming license. They'd never had a license. So we worked on that. I would say it took five or six years of investigations and meetings. Spike was originally involved in that, but ultimately Don Carano and Bob McDonald took it over personally. I did some work on it, carried some bags and went to a lot of meetings, and would, again, do the technical backup work, but they were working with the Gaming Board and Commission members.

They wanted to participate in gaming revenues, because it's better to get a share of the

money than it is just to sell the machines. They were going to buy in, and they eventually went into partnership with Si Redd, who was the local owner of Bally Manufacturing. He was licensed, and he ran Bally Manufacturing in the state of Nevada, but the main company was not licensed, and they wanted to grow. Si Redd ultimately established IGT. Bally Manufacturing is still probably the second largest manufacturer of gaming equipment; in those days they were the largest. Although Nevada was one of the few states that had legal gambling, New Jersey came in at the end of the 1970s so it was very important or worthwhile for them to get licensed.

Phil Hannifin was a friend of both Don and Bob's, and he was in charge of the Gaming Control Board at that time. Pete Echeverria was the Chairman of the Gaming Commission. This is the hierarchy: the board is the full-time state people with three members, and the commission is made up of five people, who are not full-time, but they sit on the board, and they make the final decision. Again, the Bally one was very controversial, because they had some reputed ties to some unsavory people. At least those were the claims and allegations, and they went through a long, long, long process. Eventually, it came down to the hearing before the Gaming Board, which was chaired by Phil Hannifin. The gaming board approved the license, but they put conditions on it, and this changed the law, the way the state of Nevada worked. They'd put conditions on it that most, if not all, of the key members, both stockholders and officers, of Bally had to resign. That included a fellow by the name of Sam Kline, and that included Bill O'Donnell, who was the president—they have to resign in order to get the company licensed. It was a publicly-traded company, too, which was one of the first publicly-traded companies ever to go through this process. This was before we had all the Wall Street ownership of the casinos. This is one of the first ones, if not the first one—it may have been the first publicly-traded company to go through gaming license approval in the state of Nevada,

because it was only into the mid-to-late 1970s that Nevada decided to allow publicly-traded companies—this was an alternative to the financing that I'd mentioned earlier, which was not available very much.

Well, obviously, it wasn't a good result for the Gaming Board to have them licensed, but instead to have them resign and sell their stock—the major stockholders—and for Bill O'Donnell, who was the president and was running the company, resign as well.

They felt some of them had inappropriate contacts with people of unsavory character. But in Bill O'Donnell's case, it certainly wasn't well-established, but it was rumor and innuendo, and the board was being very, very cautious. Well, the board didn't make the final decision. The final decision was made by the commission. Now, the law was and the practice was in those days, in order to overturn a decision of the board, you needed the unanimous vote of the commission. Now, the commission had five members on it, and it was unlikely that you could ever get five members to overturn a decision. So it was going to be a difficult and daunting task. But what happened was the board had recommended approval subject to conditions, so then the issue became, "OK. They did recommend approval, so we're not asking them to overturn that. We're only asking them to change some of the conditions. What kind of vote do you need to have to change conditions?" So we asked the legal counsel to the Gaming Board at the time, who was Bud Hicks.

Bud is now one of our partners in this firm, but he, at that time, was working for the Attorney General's office, and he was in charge of the gaming. He represented the State of Nevada on all the gaming issues. He gave an opinion at the time that still is the law, that it only takes a majority vote of the commission to overrule a condition of the board, because it wasn't the approval or denial that they were overturning. We took the Bally application to the commission, and it was again a hotly-debated and contested hearing, but

what happened is that they did license them, and they did change the conditions by a three-to-two vote to allow Bill O'Donnell to continue on with his ownership and as president, and they removed most of the onerous conditions. That was when Pete Echeverria was the chairman, and, again, Bob and Don have a long, close relationship with Pete, and they worked with the members of the commission to be able to get Bally licensed.

Bally, through that period of time, had continued on for many, many years to be one of our major clients in the firm. At one point in time, they bought the MGM property here and were in the casino business. They do very little in northern Nevada now. We still do some work for them, but not like we did in those days. They're not nearly as active in the state of Nevada as they used to be, although they do have casinos in Las Vegas. All of the people that we dealt with have either retired or died at this point in time, so the old guard has changed hands at Bally.

One of the other interesting cases that came on that Bob and Don, and actually I was actively involved in, was Ted Jennings. Ted Jennings was from South Dakota, and he bought a large piece of property up at Lake Tahoe and wanted to build a casino in South Shore, and a fellow by the name of Oliver Khale owned an adjoining piece, and they went through this process together. If you're driving to Lake Tahoe, right when you get to Kingsbury Grade going into South Tahoe, on the right it's still an open pasture, permanently preserved as an open pasture. That was Ted Jennings's property. It was a large piece of property, and this was at the early days of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). The property was in Douglas County, and in order to get approval, we had to go through not only Douglas County, but we had to also get approval by the TRPA. Those were the days when they had the compact.

Spike Wilson, who was actively involved in the compact, was not one that supported any more casinos at Lake Tahoe. Very few people did. At least, politically they did not. So this was a

very, very controversial project. Bob and Don were actively involved, because they knew all the people that ran the TRPA and Douglas County and helped in that process considerably. There are, for instance, county commissioners from Washoe County who are on the TRPA board, as well as one from Carson City and one from Douglas County, and state-appointed people were also on it. But the TRPA had a dual board; it had five members from Nevada and five members from California, and this became the infamous dual majority. The compact said that in order to take action, there had to be a majority vote from both states. We had to have a majority of Nevada people and a majority of the California people, but it also said, if they don't take any action, the project or proposal is deemed approved after 90 days or 120 days or some period like that.

As Ted Jennings's project was going through the process, we got approved in Douglas County, and then we took it up to the TRPA—this was the beginning, by the way, of an organization that still exists, the League to Save Lake Tahoe. They became active, and they opposed this project. The attorney general's office of the State of California opposed this project—and the vote was: California voted against it five to zero; Nevada voted for it three to two, but in order to take action they needed a dual majority. Three out of ten voted for it, and under the rule, they didn't take action.

After ninety days, the law was that this project was deemed approved, and that resulted in a lot of lawsuits. We had a lawsuit that the State of Nevada brought on because of an environmental issue, and there's a funny story there.

The case was filed by Roger Trounday's office, and Roger Trounday—I think he went to high school with Don. He was an O'Callaghan appointee, and he was in charge of the state environmental protection. There was an environmental issue about this project, and he brought a suit about it. We had Judge Guinan that was assigned to the case, originally, and who had been appointed by O'Callaghan and had a

long affiliation with Bob, but the other side disqualified him, so he could not hear the case. We wanted to find out what judge in the state of Nevada we could get, and they had a judge by the name of Judge Sexton, who I had not heard of. I didn't know Judge Sexton, so I went to Bob and said, "Are they going to get Judge Sexton? Do we know him? Is he any good? Will he do a good job?"

Bob said, "We want Judge Sexton."

He was one of his old buddies, and over the years they had shared many cocktails together. So Judge Sexton was going to hear this case, and he did. I was principally the lawyer involved in it, but when we went to the hearings, Bob and Don would be sitting at the table with me, and we came out very good in that lawsuit. Judge Sexton actually lived in a trailer up in what is now Sun Valley area, Washoe County. We had to go up there, and his wife was his secretary. He'd draft the order and put it all together, and we won the case in Nevada. Well, the League to Save Lake Tahoe and the State of California also sued, and they sued us in federal court in front of Bruce Thompson in Reno. Bruce Thompson, while he said he didn't like casinos at Lake Tahoe, said, "I have to read this compact, and what it says is, they're entitled to go ahead," but there was an interesting twist that happened. He threw out their case, the State of California—this was the California Attorney General—so they appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which is in San Francisco.

Ted Jennings was still interested in building this project, and he announced that he was going to start his project. So the State of California got an order from the Ninth Circuit saying, "You cannot build your project while this appeal is pending." They call it a "stay pending appeal" is the technical term. But they did that on an *ex parte* basis. In other words, they did it without getting our side of the story, but the Ninth Circuit gave us an opportunity to address it, which we did. And one of our issues was if they're going to enjoin us, they ought to have to put up a bond to

protect us if they lose the suit, and that's what the law is. So what the Ninth Circuit did was say, "OK, we're going to affirm the stay, but we're going to send this case back to Bruce Thompson to determine whether the State of California should have to put up a bond in order to get the stay." So we went back in front of Bruce Thompson. Again, Bob and Don and I were the principal lawyers who would show up in court. And we went to Thompson, who was a great judge, and he heard all the evidence and eventually said, "OK, State of California, if you want to stay this project, you have to put up a \$3.2 million bond." And that was a considerable amount of bond in those days. I can remember to this day, I asked the judge as he was making his ruling, "Your honor, would you put up a time frame that states they have to post it in ten days or something?"

He looked at me and said, "The Ninth Circuit did not ask me to do that, so I'm not going to do that."

So he just ruled that they have to put up a \$3.2 million dollar bond; it didn't say when, where, or what. The State of California appealed that order, of course, the bond. What happened was, our client then asked us, "Well, can I proceed with my project?"

We did a lot of research on this, because they never put up the bond, and we concluded that the bond was a condition of the injunction. If they didn't put up the bond, the injunction shouldn't be enforceable. So we waited like ten days, twenty days, thirty days, and they didn't put up the bond. So finally, we gave the opinion to Mr. Jennings, "Go ahead and start your project," which he did. He made an announcement. He had equipment out there, and there was a big groundbreaking ceremony to build this casino. Of course, the State of California went crazy, and they took us to the Ninth Circuit and got another order stopping us, but tried to put us in contempt of court, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, for both my client and the law firm, and sued the law firm for contempt of court, saying we disobeyed a court order. We had a hearing on

that down in front of the Ninth Circuit, and I remember that one, too, because Don and Bob were sitting at the table, and I was standing up there addressing the court. The judge came out and looked at me and said, "Mr. Frankovich, did you advise your client that he could commence construction?"

I looked at the judge and said, "Yes, I did."

He looked at me and said, "Are you sure you advised your client to commence construction?"

I said, "Yes, I did."

He looked at me and said, "Are you very sure you advised your client?"

Of course, Don and Bob, at this point in time, are about ready to grab me by the collar and say, "Sit down! Say no." [laughter]

And I said, "Yes."

So they had this big hearing on contempt, and then they didn't ever make a decision for a long period of time. I'll complete the story, but in the meantime, they ultimately concluded that we won the appeal and we won the case and California was not entitled to an injunction. They went up to the U.S. Supreme Court, and, again, they got an order signed, with no input from us, by Justice William O. Douglas, who was a famous environmental, very liberal judge up there—great judge at the Supreme Court. He signed this order stopping us again, but gave us the opportunity to respond. We ultimately responded, and when we responded, he got rid of the order, so the project was free to go ahead.

During this period of time, though, there was a lot of turmoil and issues about the project, and they actually amended the TRPA compact during our long legal process, and they made it even more difficult. Ultimately, the TRPA came out and said, "You can't have any more casinos at Tahoe," because Oliver Khale's site was also part of this process. We were kind of grandfathered in under the old compact, but no one could ever build any new ones. And that's still the law today; No one can build a new one. They can't even expand the existing ones. They can remodel them and make them better, but they can't make them bigger.

We won the case, but during that period of time, there was a big political turmoil that said we shouldn't have these casinos. So there was a bill passed through Congress, and the government actually came in and bought both of these pieces of property—Ted Jennings's property and Oliver Khale's. Bible and Cannon weren't our Senators at that period of time—it was actually Paul Laxalt—Cannon still may have been there, but Bible was not there.

Oliver Khale made another deal. He got bought out by the state, and then the county ultimately built the county facilities up on his property up there. But the federal government passed a law that enabled them to buy Ted Jennings's property at Lake Tahoe. It was like twelve and a half million dollars, which was a lot of money at the time, but that was the appraised value of this as a casino site. I used to have a copy of the check here. I always kept that, because it was one of the famous cases that I was involved in for a long period of time that Bob and Don were also actively involved in.

But getting back to the contempt thing, it was interesting, because about three years later—I'd kind of forgotten about this—they [the State of California] wanted the law firm to pay a lot of money as a penalty for violating this court order. So we were all a little nervous about it, but once we won the case and kind of forgot about it, one day I got an order in the mail from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. It was one of these things you never forget in all your life. The first line of the order was, "The proper remedy from a court order is an appeal, not to violate the order." Then the second sentence said, "And an attorney who advises his client to disobey a court order is in contempt of court." So there were the first two lines, and I read those and said, "We're in trouble here." Then the third line said, "However, there were extenuating circumstances here and understandable and blah, blah." So they did not hold us in contempt of court at the end of the day in the Ninth Circuit. Ted Jennings's case was probably one of the bigger local cases that went

through that process, and certainly the biggest case at Lake Tahoe in that period of time. That was the late 1970s.

They have subsequently changed the voting process. They have a new compact, and things are very different, but this case is one of the reasons why. The original compact, I think, was created in the late 1960s.

As I said earlier, everybody that works with Bob is his friend, because that's his approach to just about everything in life, which has endeared him to a lot of people. He got an award a few years ago from the Lung Association and that's one of the things I said at the time is he can do anything and say anything, and everybody forgives him, because everybody loves him so much that they say, "Now that's just Bob," and he can get away with it. He's that way with the lawyers around here; he's literally loved by everyone. As I said earlier, I first met him when I was a young boy on the ski team, and he was developing his reputation at that point in time as somebody that liked to have a good time and have fun, and he was a very active person. He was a skier, but what we shared together later on, and did a lot of—we both loved to fish, and Bob and I went on quite a few fishing trips. Although the better stories come from the trips that he went on with Don Carano, Bob and I would go to Pyramid Lake a couple times a month for many years. He had a boat out there that he would keep at Crosby Lodge, and we represented the Crosbys at that point in time. They have a little piece of private property among the tribe out there in the middle of the reservation. We'd go visit them, and then we'd go fishing all day. As I say, I think I was with Bob's son-in-law Dennis one day, maybe even before he was married to Peggy, but he was much younger, or he and Peggy had just been married for a short period of time. Of course, when you went fishing with Bob, you always had some Scotch before and some Scotch after and had a cocktail here and there. And we'd go out there with Doc Archer, too. He was another one that was in the office all the time—not that he was a

client, but he was probably Bob's best friend. But anyway, we were talking about the fishing at this point in time. We went out one day with Dennis, and Archer was not with us that day. Dennis and I started fishing. Bob had a Scotch and said, "I'm going below. You guys fish." We went fishing, and at the end of the day we went over to the Crosby Lodge and it's kind of a rough bar. It has a pool table, and about 75 to 80 percent of the people there are the Paiutes from the tribe, and usually the guys that like to drink are all around there. So we had a few cocktails there afterwards, at which point in time Bob started making derogatory comments about the Native Americans—it's more than a myth that people disappear at Pyramid Lake sometimes and never get heard of again—and I was terrified, and Dennis was terrified. I'm not going to repeat the comment he made, because it was an inappropriate comment, which Bob was capable of doing, especially when he had a few Scotches in him. But what we did was, Dennis got on one side of Bob, and I got on the other side, and we turned around, and we just marched straight out of there. Didn't say a word. Got in the car and just went as fast as we could go to get off the reservation. I'm telling you, I was scared to death! Scared to death.

Another time, we were pulling Bob's boat. It's a funny story because he wanted to go to the Bonanza Casino on our way back, and he was driving. We went by the Bonanza, and he was pulling this big boat behind his car. The Bonanza had a big overhang, kind of a porte-cochère that hung over the front of it. So, of course, Bob drives right up with his car, and the windshield of the boat hits the porte-cochère, and it just, of course, smashes the windshield, and it starts knocking down the side of the building. Well, at that point in time, Bob's son Boo was one of the managers at the Bonanza, and Boo comes running out with a baseball bat ready to kill whoever it was that just ran into the building. And there's, of course, Bob sitting in the car, and Boo yelling at him about ruining the porte-cochère [laughter] Typical,

typical story of McDonald. He had a lot of train wrecks, metaphorically. I mean, he ruined more cars, more equipment, and one should never buy used equipment from Bob McDonald, because he used them hard and wore them out. We used to go fishing every year. He loved to go down to the Feather River, and we'd go salmon fishing and striper fishing. He had a guide friend of his down there named Jack Adan, and we'd go down and stay in a little town called Gridley. And, again, there's always a local pub in Gridley, too. Bob would go in, and sometimes he'd get belligerent, but most people would let him get away with it. Once in a while they wouldn't, and he wasn't afraid of any person or anything else—and he still isn't. He can be very, very feisty. Just a great guy to have fun with.

He was once honored at the fifth annual Humanitarian Awards dinner for the Northern Nevada Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1978. The firm was there—

we were pretty small, and we had a table. I think all the lawyers at the firm were there and Vera Stern was also an honoree. He would make these comments, and then he said, "And I want to congratulate Vera Stern, who's a nice Jew girl." There was no malice in his heart, but he would say these inappropriate things. If he said it today, he'd get shot, or if anybody else said it, they'd have been shot then. But everybody gave Bob a pass, knowing that in his heart he didn't mean anything negative about anybody. He was just having a good time and made these strange comments sometimes. Definitely politically incorrect.

Another time, the honoree was Don Baldwin, and Bob was introducing and making comments about Don Baldwin. Don Baldwin owned Warehouse Markets, which was a supermarket chain here in Reno, which is now Scolari's. The Scolari family bought out the Baldwin's. Anyway, Bob was introducing Don, and he said, "Don



Gloria and Bob at their 50th wedding anniversary in 1992.

Baldwin is getting the award as one of the Christians, but if you ever shopped in his market, you'd think he was a Jew."

Oh, and everybody in the place just says, "Oh, no!" and starts groaning. [laughter] Just, it was Bob, and it's one of these comments. Politically incorrect but loved! [laughter]

It's not like that these days, and that's unfortunate. What I mean is that there was a lot more fun we had in those days than we do now. Now there are so many rules and so many times where you must be politically correct. You can't make comments about anybody's race, religion, gender, or anything, without getting in trouble these days. That was not the case in the 1960s and the 1970s, and certainly in the 1950s when Bob was maturing. That's probably the inappropriate word. I don't know if he ever matured. [laughter] Few people have had more fun.

I'll never forget a comment from Bob's wife, Gloria. Gloria made one of the greatest comments I've ever heard. They have been married now sixty-five years, but it was at their fiftieth anniversary party. Glo got up, and she said, "You know, people often ask me what it's like to live with Bob McDonald for fifty years. My reply is, 'I wouldn't have missed a minute, and I'd never do it again.'" I mean, it's a great comment! [laughter] They are amazing.

Bob and Don, in my opinion, are the heart and soul of the firm, and Bob certainly to even a larger extent, because he's been here the last twenty years. Don has been closely associated with the firm, but more as a client than a lawyer. They're certainly the heart and soul of this firm. The firm has evolved from the five or six lawyers when I started. Now we're one of the preeminent law firms in the state of Nevada. We have forty-five, fifty lawyers. We have an office in Las Vegas. In my opinion, we do exceptional work, and I think it all evolves from our founding fathers. We sent out a Christmas card this year. That's another thing we do these days that was inappropriate in the old days. Lawyers tend to market. They call it

marketing as opposed to advertising. Bob and Don and Spike are the original founding fathers, or at least that's who we attributed it to, although Alan Bible deserves his place in there, too. But we've had good times with Bob McDonald, and he is still the heart and soul of this outfit.

NEOMA SAULNIER

Neoma Saulnier has been named an alumna of the year by Truckee Meadows Community College, and Woman of the Year by the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and honored as a Woman of Achievement by the Nevada Women's Fund. In addition, Neoma raised over \$50,000 in a five-day period to help the flood victims in her hometown of Fernley, Nevada. She is currently a Trustee for Fun Camp. She has been an employee at McDonald Carano Wilson LLP since 1992.

I was born in Reno in 1971, and then my family moved outside of Fernley and built a small ranch along the Truckee River where my sister and I were raised with my father. He still lives there. After I attended and graduated from Fernley High School, I then decided I was going to go to college to be a court reporter. I made some phone calls to some of the larger firms in Reno to see who was hiring for just a part-time courier so I could supplement my income while I was going to college. One of the firms I called was McDonald Carano, and I spoke with the administrator, Margie Vollmann, and she indicated that, yes, they were hiring part-time couriers and to come in for an interview. So at the ripe age of twenty-one, I came in for an interview for the part-time courier position.

My first encounter with Bob McDonald was on the day of my interview. As Margie was walking me back to her office, which was adjacent to Bob's and was this fish-bowl in the middle—it was all enclosed in glass—and Bob always liked to stand in his doorway and kind of just look out upon all the other offices and people to kind of see what was going on, and as I approached to go into her office for the interview—I was dressed to the nines for this part-time courier job; I didn't know any better, being from the ranch, you know, I figured you dress up for everything—Bob was standing there, and he got this little smirk on his face and went, "Well, hello!" As we were walking by, he gives this flirty, little grin and stuff, and Margie looks at him, and she goes, "Bob, you can't have her!" This was when he was in the northwest corner of 241 Ridge Street. I believe at that time he was seventy-two. It was in 1992. It was kind of funny, we chuckled, carried on, and I went to the interview.

Well, as irony would have it, Bob's secretary at that time, Shirley Littlejohn, was retiring. I interviewed for the courier position, but because I had some bookkeeping and light secretarial experience, I was soon asked if I wanted to be Bob McDonald's personal and professional



Neoma Saulnier and Bob, ca. 2006. Neoma was Bob's personal assistant for many years.

secretary upon Shirley's retirement. So that's what ensued—becoming Bob's secretary, which led to me working directly with him for six years and many, many stories. [laughter]

He wasn't handling cases so much at the time, but Bob was always in the office at least 60 percent of the day. Primarily, he'd normally come in around nine, nine-thirtyish. At that point most of his time was spent as the political supporter to the firm, meaning that, although he wasn't doing active litigation and going to court so much anymore, everyone always came to Bob whenever there was a need for a call to be placed to a senator or to a judge, or to someone with some influence. He was the juice man. He was the one that everyone would come to and say, "Hey, Bob...."

In typical Bob fashion, everyone to Bob is a good guy, and if his gardener happened to run over his wife, who was an illegal immigrant, they

would come to Bob, and Bob would try to help them out in some fashion. So there was also always something like that going on, and then a lot of the visitors that he had were people who wanted to invest in something or wanted him to get involved in some venture. For example, Jackpot Enterprises was the gaming company that he was both legally and personally invested in, but a lot of his time was spent basically just kind of going around and keeping the peace within the firm.

McDonald Carano now sits at 115 people firm-wide between our two offices. When I first started, we certainly didn't have that many, but we probably had 70 people firm-wide, and there was still very much that feeling that family and friends are first, while business and making money are second. As a business grows and evolves, and as politics and more people get involved, management starts to layer itself more and more,

so that kind of vibe starts to fade a little bit because everybody wants to be very black and white and very bottom line, and all about the mighty dollar. But at McDonald Carano, those who are still active and run the firm today, know that that's not what it's been founded on. That's not what's made its reputation so phenomenal. It was Bob McDonald's belief, which he advocated, and still we try to adhere to today, that you're nothing without the support of everyone around you. As great as some of our attorneys may be—Bob had a great line that he always said every Christmas party when he'd give his speech/inappropriate joke—that if it wasn't for the support staff and the secretaries and the runners, that the attorneys would be picking shit with the chickens, and he truly believed that and advocated it all the time. That is the one thing when people talk about our reputation, “What do people think of McDonald Carano?” It is that foundation that we believe in the people here first and foremost. We hardly ever fire anybody, because they almost have to commit a crime to get fired from here because we understand that that affects someone's *life*. It affects their livelihood and their well-being, and that's how the firm was founded, and that's Bob McDonald through and through.

Bob not only advocated the people first, and don't ever forget that, but “Everybody is a good guy,” was what he always said. A person really had to do Bob wrong to not be on his good guy list, and God forbid they did that, because then you were in deep trouble.

Everyone looked forward to every day, seeing him walking around our halls and listening to a Bob McDonald story, whether it was one that he had told numerous times before, or something that had just happened. There was the time he was shooting squirrels out his kitchen window and forgot to open the window. Another is the story of him and Jim Archer in the duck blind. They're both so incredibly hard of hearing, and they both like to have a little nip in the afternoon, and one of them is looking at the other and says, “It's windy.”

The other one says, “No, it's Thursday.”

The other one says, “Me, too. Let's go get a drink.”

And I can just see the two of them, hard of hearing, sitting in a duck blind somewhere, but it was those kinds of stories that everybody every day wanted to come in and hear and share with Bob. It was nothing for him to tell ten jokes a day to anybody that would listen.

Bob was never technologically inclined so—even the phone, like buzzing him on the intercom and saying, “Bob, you have a phone call”—he could never quite understand that you push a button, don't hang up. So he always got confused, and he'd hang up on people all the time, and it got to where if I had a phone call for him, we would yell back and forth, literally, and I'd go, “Bob, I have Bob Cashell on the phone.”

“What?”

And it was that kind of thing back and forth. Then I'd have to say, “Bob, don't pick up the phone yet. Wait until the phone rings, and then you pick it up.”

“OK.”

Although he *claimed* that he didn't understand the workings of the intricacies of the phone or the computer, I know it was simply because he wanted someone else to do it for him, and we all did that. We just kind of played into his acting like he didn't know what he was doing. I'm not certain how he flew a plane in World War II, but he just didn't seem to get the workings of the phone and certainly voicemail. We turned it off. We didn't even have his voicemail hooked up, because I think I tried to tell him five different times how to get his voicemail, and he didn't understand. So I said, “Forget it. Forget it. Don't worry about it. I'll take messages.”

But every day he was very easy to work for in the sense that he was always pleasant, always very good in that regard. He has zero patience, however. If he asked me to call Senator Reid, and I called Senator Reid, and I just got a message to him because he wasn't available, Bob would inevitably come out five more times in the next

thirty minutes and go, “Has Senator Reid called back? Has he called back yet? Can you call again?” I mean, he was very impatient in that regard. When he wanted something, he wanted it yesterday, and he would drive me insane until he got what he wanted. I think he’s definitely very, very relentless. When he had his mind set on something, he wasn’t one of those that could compartmentalize and put it away for a while and go back to it later. It was, “I’m doing it 100 percent right now. I’m getting it done with, and until then I’m not going to focus on anything else.” So I think in that regard, I absolutely think it was a strength. I never even thought it was necessarily a vice; I just thought it was a quirk. [laughter] Or it was a style, and because many of the attorneys and people that he dealt with knew that to be his style, he would get responses quickly, because they knew, “Bob’s never going to leave me alone until I respond to him.” He is one that a person never wanted to blow off, because he would remember forever if they blew him off, and he wouldn’t let them forget it. If someone didn’t pay a legal fee, if he felt that they owed the firm or him in some regard, even if it was twenty dollars, he would remember, and it would come up often. [laughter] He definitely had a very good memory in that regard.

Bob was great. Bob not only was phenomenal, but I learned a lot from him professionally—he had a very high ethical standard. He is a very well-respected person in the community, and again, I think that comes down to his belief in the people, not the dollar. A lot of people would say Bob’s been lucky over the years, because he’s had some really good investments, but I think, no, it’s because he’s been true and good at heart, and those things have come back around. He’s never been out always after the mighty dollar, but maybe to help someone out, or to invest in something that’s a start-up to *help* someone out, and those things have paid big dividends.

He definitely afforded me some stepping stones that probably otherwise I wouldn’t have

been offered. Again, I think he just saw somebody whose personality clicked with his, and that he enjoyed being around, and he’d share his jokes with and stories. So people that he shared that kind of life with, he wanted to help out, and he certainly helped me in many regards.

Bob is almost my surrogate father. He walked me down the aisle in Hawaii when I got married, which is another funny story. Bob and Gloria flew over to Hawaii to attend my wedding and Bob walked me down the aisle. It was an outdoor wedding at sunset in Maui, and I’ll never forget this. I had been getting dressed and had this strapless dress, and I’m walking outside to the garden, the sun is setting, and Bob is meeting me downstairs to walk me down this grassy area to where everybody’s waiting on the shore there. I see Bob, and he’s in a suit, and he looks nervous, and I think, “OK. Well, I’m going to break the ice here.” As I walk around the corner, and the



Neoma being escorted by Bob at her wedding.

sun's setting, I'm going to say something kind of funny to calm him down a little, because we're both pretty nervous. So I grab his arm, we start to walk down the little aisle, I lean over to him, and because this dress I was wearing didn't afford much underneath it without it showing, like the panty lines, I had to go sans everything underneath, so I thought, "OK, I'm going to let Bob in on this." So I go, "Hey, Bob, I'm not wearing any panties." I thought, "Oh, this will give him a roar and he'll laugh."

And he goes, "I *know*."

Because the way the sun was setting, it was shooting *right* through my dress, and he could apparently see all things. [laughter] So needless to say, the rest of the ceremony I held the bouquet strategically to keep me covered, and we've laughed to this day about how he said, "Yes, I *know*." So he was the one who actually got me to relax a little bit, and he walked me down the aisle, and it was fantastic and very memorable.

I can't say enough about the guy. The firm would not be fifty-five years old and be as solid as it is compared to all the other big firms that have split and merged and dissolved, and the cement that has held McDonald Carano together is the Bob McDonald theory, and that is, again, people first, money second, and the money will come if you treat the people right. And that's proven to be very true.

Bob was always available for anybody that needed anything from him. He was always right there to talk to them, and he wasn't someone who was just listening to their story out of courtesy. He was someone who was listening to their story with an intent to do something to help, and, generally, he put full effort into helping someone. One of a kind, Bob.

He may not have practiced active law in the last fifteen years, but he contributed so much in regards to just the overall well-being of the firm. There have been many comments behind closed doors where people have said, "If the Bob McDonald way of doing business ever goes away from this firm, it will never, ever be the same,

and it will more than likely break up." I think as long as everyone holds that belief, we'll be fine, but as you can imagine, the bigger you get, the more political things become.

Most everybody would just kind of wander up and come and chat with Bob, and he'd tell them a foul joke or two. Normally when his door shut, it was because he was telling a dirty joke. There were some closed-door powwows that went on—not that many. Normally it was when Don Carano would come to town or something, and they'd be chatting about something, but not too much of that. So his door was always open, and many times he was standing in it. [laughter] Most of the time.

Harry Reid was the senator at the time. I called him for Bob on a number of occasions. Today it's very difficult to get ahold of Harry Reid, as you can imagine—his position is such a big one now—but I know that if Bob McDonald called, he'd get a return phone call and very quickly. And he is probably the *only* one within this firm that you could say that about. I don't think there's anybody else here that Harry Reid could call back with any urgency, but he definitely always did with Bob. He responded very quickly to anything that Bob needed or questions that he had.

There were also a lot of phone calls that we made to just different government agencies, whether it was an immigration issue, for example and he had some connection, or maybe someone was wanting to get a patent. Bob operated very much under the assumption of, "It's not always what you know, but who you know," and he always knew someone somewhere that could always get something done. Never with Bob did we have to start at ground level because there was always somebody, "Oh, I know someone," down at whatever office. He'd make a phone call, and we just skipped three days worth of legwork, because Bob made a phone call. He knew a lot of people, like at the Gaming Commission, the governor's office, and, of course, Bob Cashell. He spoke to him any time we needed anything.

Even moving into this building [on West Liberty Street] is an example because we ran into a situation where the construction on this building was a little bit behind, but we had to get out of the old building or otherwise we were paying double rent, and the rent on these places is ridiculous. So it came down to the day we were going to move, and we had everything packed. All of a sudden, the construction company here at our new building said, “We can’t get the certificate of occupancy, because of some electrical issues, so you guys can’t move in.”

“Well, yes, we need to move in, because we have the movers lined up and the whole thing,” and I just go into full panic mode so I went into Bob and said, “You have to call someone and see what you can do, because we are packed and ready to roll, and we can’t hold this back. Otherwise, we’re going to miss the movers, and we’re not going to get them for another month.”

He made a phone call, and about twenty minutes later I got one back saying, “You’re OK. You’re OK to move.” So we lived amongst some wires and things, and we lived amongst construction workers for the first two months here, but it was because of Bob just making that phone call. He was just innately influential. I think it’s just simply because he’s been such a figurehead. He’s been an influence in Nevada since back to O’Callaghan—he’s just the man. Just the man that everyone knew to go to for influence.

I worked with Bob as his executive secretary for six years, and during that six-year period, I changed my major from court reporting to legal office administration, which is basically legal office management, so while I was working with Bob, I went to school at night, and I got my degree. At that time, we still had the administrator here, Margie, and I actually got a job offer at Robison Belaustegui to be their office administrator. I remember going into Bob and saying, “I got this job offer. What am I going to do? I don’t know what Margie’s going to do, if she’s ever going to retire. I kind of want to move up and use my degree, and this might be an opportunity.”

Bob—one of the times he went behind closed doors—called together some of his fellow partners and said, “We need to create something for her to keep her here until Margie retires.” We knew Margie was probably getting close to retirement, so they came back and said, “How about we split the office functions from the personnel functions, and you handle all the personnel? You handle all the hiring and firing and training.”

So that’s what evolved from me being Bob’s assistant to being the director of human resources, which then evolved into being the administrator when Margie left. Margie ended up going to Las Vegas and being our manager for a few years before she retired, and then I assumed all of her responsibilities in Reno when she moved down there. So now, almost fifteen years later, here I am at this part-time job that I wanted while I went to court reporting school. [laughter] Huh? Funny how that happens. But, you know what, I always tell people when I interview them, even today—and if it were not for Bob, I wouldn’t be able to say this—“Don’t take my word for what a great firm this is, because I’m a huge cheerleader. This firm has been phenomenal to me, and Bob McDonald’s been phenomenal.” I say, “Go out and ask *anybody* on the street what they think of McDonald Carano, and what do they think of the people that work here,” and *never* is there a negative comment, unless, of course, you’re an adversary, and then they might try to dig something up. But that is because of the reputation, and the reputation is built around Bob’s groundwork that he’d placed many, many years ago, and that has sustained to now.

Fun Camp, Inc. is the non-profit, Nevada organization that Bob founded to send underprivileged kids from northern Nevada to a three-week camp in Susanville, California, and this just kind of goes again to not only Bob’s involvement in the firm, but obviously in the community and how much he gave back. Huge contributor. I wrote all of his checks for all those years, and I just saw how *much* money he gave to

the university, to Fun Camp and to so many different things—the Boys & Girls Club—you name it, he was the first to step up. He would see an article in the paper about someone whose house burnt down, and he was the first one to say, “Write a check.” He was all about doing things like that almost on a daily basis.

Fun Camp, Inc. was a huge part of that, and he got great joy in seeing these kids—that seldom ever even got off the street that they lived on to go do anything—get to go to an awesome summer camp for three weeks and mix right in with children that were from very affluent parents, and no one ever saw the difference. He felt that was one of the neatest things about Fun Camp—that it didn’t matter the color of their skin, or what their background was, or how much money their family made. They’re just a bunch of kids having fun. He *loved* Fun Camp. He’d get the thank-you letters back that the kids would write and tear up because the kids would write just amazing thank-you letters about, “Thank you for sending me to Fun Camp. Please send me again.” They’d all plead to go again because they had such a good time. He had just started it about three years prior to my working for him when he was just sending ten kids, and in the last few years, he’s been sending fifty plus kids to this camp at a cost of almost two thousand dollars a head—actually more now. He had to raise some significant money, and although he would send out his solicitation letters to all of his connections, again, it was that dogged sort of persistence that would get him money and more money. He had *no* problem in calling the Gary Primms and those guys up and saying, “Hey, I need some money, and don’t just send me a couple hundred bucks. I want some big...” And he would get it every year. He never had a problem in raising the money for Fun Camp, and people, again, knew that you couldn’t avoid his phone call, because he would just keep calling. And they better write that check, because he’d follow up, “Where’s that check?” for all the kids and stuff. Yes, Fun Camp, Inc. is a really cool thing

Actually, I have three titles, which is ridiculous: the office administrator, the director of human resources, and the marketing manager. I assist with the firm’s marketing. We have a PR agency that we work with who puts all those things together, but I’m the marketing manager and sit on that committee that finalizes all those things.

But Bob was always involved in everything. Bob and I have such a neat relationship. He’s definitely like the grandfather and even the father. I was never particularly close with my dad, and Bob kind of filled those shoes for me. He was always my confidant. Inasmuch as Bob always thought everybody was a good person and listened, he was also very honest in his responses. If I went in complaining about something, and he thought it was silly, he’d basically say, “Quit whining,” but if he really felt I was being mistreated or needed assistance in something, he was always the first to step up and help.

I think some of the most fun times that I’ve had here at the firm were organizing and attending events that had something to do with Bob, whether it be a birthday party, his being honored at the Lung Association, or those sorts of things, and getting to put events together, not only for him, but events that he would enjoy attending. I can remember Jim Archer was at one of Bob’s birthday parties down at Texas Longhorns, where customers could throw the peanut shells on the floor. That was soon after I started here, probably within the first year or two. I still vividly remember that, and it was those types of things that *he* really looked forward to as well because he was getting to hang out and tell stories with all his friends.

You know what I think? I think if you’re lucky in life, you’re lucky to say that you have a couple of really good friends. I think if anybody were to ask me today to name my top three friends, Bob would be in that top three. There’s no doubt about it. I still enjoy going to lunch with him and spending time with him, and we profess our love for each other in a daughter or granddaughter-father sort of way. He was also one that let it be

known that it was OK to profess that, and even in a professional environment, to let people know you cared about them, because they're not always going to be here, and if you don't tell them today, you may not get a chance to tell them tomorrow. So he'd help *me* in that regard, because I've never been someone who was openly very emotional. He was really good about kind of opening my eyes to that in saying, "Your tears don't compromise your strength, and it's OK to cry, and it's OK to be emotional." I love Bob dearly, I mean, on so many levels. Professionally, I respect him immensely. I have gained a lot of knowledge from him over the almost fifteen years, and I just adore him. I love Bob McDonald very, very much.

There have been times, trust me, that I have tried to lie to him, and he *can*—he can see right through it. He has a keen ability especially when he asks how you're doing, and you say, "Fine," he'll say, "Are you sure?" and he can definitely tell so he makes you tell the truth! It's because I think, "Good God, he's almost eighty-seven! I can't lie to this man." [laughter] That would be wrong.

But there have been so many stories over the years. He has told so many stories, but then, I've also been witness to a lot of them, especially ones with regard to the technology thing, which is funny, and the phone. A very prominent figure in our city was in his office one day and was professing how he had been traveling a lot, and that his wife had been missing him and was glad to have him home again. And Bob said, "Well, how does your wife like you being gone all the time?"

He said, "Well, you know, she's OK with it, because we have phone sex."

Bob kind of laughed and said, "Oh, really? OK," and kind of went along with it, and then this person got up and left. He called me into his office, and he closes the door, and he relays this story to me about phone sex. He kind of looks at me, and he reaches around and grabs his phone, and he goes, "Phone sex, how does that work?" [laughter] He thought it was a physical thing with

the actual phone, and so I had to explain to him what phone sex was, which he found completely hysterical and amazing that people talked dirty over the phone. But he thought it had something to do with the phone, and I could just see the wheels in his mind going, "How do I get one of those? What's phone sex? How come my phone doesn't work?" I'll never forget that. [laughter] He was looking, and he's going, "How does that work?" He's looking at the handle on his phone. Oh, my God.

Yes, I'm lucky to know him and to get to talk to him as a friend. He's been a great teacher.

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